PREPARING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LITERACY TEACHERS: INVESTIGATIONS OF WHITENESS IN A LITERACY METHODS COURSE

Kelly Berghoff Royster

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Annela Teemant, Ph. D., Chair

_____

James Damico, Ph.D.

Doctoral Committee

_____

Robert Helfenbein, Ph.D.

September 30, 2013

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Stephanie Power-Carter, Ed.D.

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PREPARING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE LITERACY TEACHERS:

INVESTIGATIONS OF WHITENESS IN A LITERACY METHODS COURSE

Teacher education programs across the United States must prepare teachers who have the content area knowledge, pedagogical expertise, and cultural competence needed to teach an increasingly diverse student population. One consistent suggestion for programs committed to preparing culturally responsive teachers is to incorporate investigations of Whiteness into all aspects of teacher education. While investigations into Whiteness are now relatively common in multicultural coursework, they are still an anomaly in methods courses. This dissertation addresses this gap in the research by exploring what happens when preservice teachers encounter investigations of Whiteness in their literacy methods course.

Using sociocultural theory, critical multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching frameworks, and critical literacy theory, this qualitative study considers how preservice teachers' knowledge and teaching actions align with transformationist teaching practices (G. R. Howard, 2006) – those practices aimed at interrupting Whiteness and generating equitable learning opportunities for all students. Focusing on a group of preservice teacher interns enrolled in an intensive six-week literacy methods course infused with investigations into Whiteness, the study considers the interns' positioning for Whiteness investigations, explores their course experience, and follows two of them into eight-week student teaching placements. Data sources from the course include observational notes, interns' assignments, audio-recordings of class participation, artifacts from course activities, and course documents. Data from student teaching

includes classroom observations, mentor and intern interviews, intern reflections, and an intern focus group.

Findings from the data analysis indicate that interns entered the course as typical White preservice teachers only superficially aware of their Whiteness. As interns engaged with the course curriculum, they began to reframe their awareness of Whiteness and their visions of literacy teaching to some extent. However, the literacy teaching practices of the focal interns were also largely influenced by their student teaching contexts. The conclusions suggest implications for investigating Whiteness with preservice teachers which include: integrating Whiteness theory programmatically, making Whiteness theory accessible, situating literacy teaching as a critical and cultural undertaking, building teacher educator competency, focusing on awareness and pedagogical aspects of Whiteness, considering "active spaces" where teachers, students, and curriculum intersect, supporting novice teachers, and gaining access to transformationist classrooms.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

"Okay," one of the course instructors, Diane[1], said to the Block III interns on the second day of class. "We're going to try something today. I want you to stand up if you grew up in a school where the majority of the students in your class were White." The chairs scraped against the tile floor as every single one of the college students rose from his or her seat. Diane looked around the room silently noting the response, as did the interns. "Now, stay standing if the majority of students in your student teaching classroom are White." Once again, the interns rustled as they adjusted positions. Only Diane remained standing (Fieldnotes, 8/25/10).

You might expect to see this activity as part of a multicultural foundations course in a teacher education program, but this was not a multicultural course. It was a literacy methods course that focused on literacy assessment and meeting the individual needs of learners in an inclusive setting according to the course syllabus. The college students – referred to as interns throughout this study – were all first-semester seniors at an urban university situated in a large, Midwestern city, and they all happened to be White. They were enrolled in what was called the Block III experience, which consisted of six weeks of literacy methods coursework followed by an eight-week student teaching placement, and they had Diane and her teaching partner, Susan, as their instructors.

Although both White females themselves, Diane and Susan recognized the distinct challenge they faced in preparing a group of White preservice teachers for teaching responsibilities – particularly literacy teaching responsibilities – in elementary classrooms comprised of culturally, racially, socio-economically, and linguistically diverse students. One way they chose to address this challenge was by infusing

[1] All names used in the study are pseudonyms.

interrogations of Whiteness into the Block III curriculum. A year before this study, Diane and I had taken a doctoral course entitled "Critical Perspectives of Whiteness." As a result of the course, Diane designed literacy activities called *invitations* that she could use with her Block III students.

In the fall of 2009, Diane, another professor, and I revised the original invitations and created additional ones to implement with the Block III interns that semester. The objective was to introduce the preservice teachers to Whiteness and help them consider the role of culture and race in their literacy work with children. The following semester, Diane began collaborating with Susan, and the two continued on the journey together. Although Diane initiated the Whiteness infusion, Susan – as an adoptive mother of a bi-racial teenage boy – frequently expressed her professional and personal support of the infusion of Whiteness.

The findings presented in this dissertation come from the fall of 2010 when Diane and Susan were entering their second semester collaborating to bring an infusion of Whiteness into their Block III literacy methods course. The purpose of this study is to understand what happens when preservice teachers encounter critical multicultural content – including investigations of Whiteness – in their literacy methods course and to explore how two of those preservice teachers enacted their visions of culturally responsive literacy practices in their student teaching placements.

Background of the Problem

White preservice teachers are preparing to teach literacy to students in culturally, racially, socio-economically, and linguistically diverse classrooms. The academic statistics in our nation indicate that there are "persistent and pernicious disparities that

exist in educational achievement, resources, and life chances between students of color and their White peers" (Hollins & Guzman, 2005, p. 478).

In the field of literacy teaching, this "pernicious and persistent disparity" is visible in the long-lasting literacy achievement gap. While the National Center for Educational Statistics (2010a) indicated overall improvements in student literacy achievement between 2004 and 2008, the gap between the achievement of White students and their Black and Hispanic peers remained intact. Furthermore, the results from fourth-graders on the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress reading assessments revealed that 43% of White students scored at or above "proficient" whereas only 16% of Black students, 17% of Hispanic students, and 18% of American Indians achieved this level of success level (NCES, 2010b). These statistics signify that current literacy teaching practices are not making literacy learning equitable for all learners.

Schools of education face the monumental task of preparing literacy teachers who know how to make literacy learning accessible and equitable for all students. It is a well-documented fact that students of color benefit from culturally responsive teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2004, 2008; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1992, 1995a, 1995b; Villegas & Lucas, 2002, 2007; Wlodkowski, 1999; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995). While nearly half of the student population is non-White, teachers who are White and middle classs still comprise 83 percent of the teaching force (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011) and most often have significantly different cultural, linguistic, and economic life experiences than their students (Sleeter, 2008). Consequently, schools of education across the United States have been developing programs and practices that target the preparation of culturally responsive teachers. Yet, this call to prepare culturally

responsive teachers remains one of the most daunting tasks facing teacher educators today (Castro, 2010). Perhaps this is because preparing culturally responsive teachers involves more than simply imparting a body of pedagogical knowledge to preservice teachers. It also requires a consideration of the influence of Whiteness on teaching and learning interactions.

A teacher's Whiteness influences literacy teaching and learning in several ways. To begin with, Whiteness separates teachers from the everyday realities of their students' lives. Sleeter's (2008) meta-analysis of studies on Whiteness in teacher education found that individuals who are White enter teaching programs with little cross-cultural background, knowledge and expertise, and naïve optimism that co-exists with unexamined stereotypes taken for granted as truth. Not only do preservice teachers lack accurate knowledge of students who are different from themselves, but generally speaking "white teachers do not adequately understand the experiences, perspectives, and learning needs of children whose racial and ethnic backgrounds are different from their own" (Richert, Donahue, & LaBoskey, 2009, p. 642). Literacy teachers must build "from and with" what students bring to school with them (Dyson, 2003). However, this is difficult for White teachers who do not adequately understand the backgrounds and experiences of their students of color and their impact on learning.

In addition, Whiteness blinds teachers to the structural inequities inherent in schools. Richert et al. (2009) argue that White teachers do not recognize the ways in which schools in general, and literacy teaching practices in particular, function to support White students' success while simultaneously thwarting the success of students of color. They fail to realize that traditional teaching practices perpetuate an educational system

that reinforces White privilege and domination at the expense of people of color (Case & Hemmings, 2005). And they do not see that their everyday interactions with students unwittingly assist in the reproduction of the racial order (Bonilla-Silva & Embrick, 2008). When White literacy teachers do not critically examine the school context and their own teaching practices, they become unsuspecting participants in the social reproduction of inequity.

Finally, Whiteness enters classrooms with White teachers. As Ryan (2006) explains, "Their Whiteness, along with the power and privilege it embodies, is a defining characteristic in the classroom" (p. 11). It shapes curriculum, relationships, assignments, responses to assignments, etc. When literacy teachers are unaware of their Whiteness, it becomes the invisible norm. In this way, uninterrogated Whiteness automatically becomes the measuring stick for the academic skills, behavior, and social skills for all students (Blanchett, 2006). Thus, Whiteness plays a strong, but silent role, in the way literacy teaching and learning are conceptualized and realized in classrooms.

The recognition that Whiteness impacts teaching and learning has prompted a relatively recent call for preservice teacher education programs to incorporate investigations into Whiteness across the curriculum. Marx (2006) noted that the preservice teachers in her study who were most moved by examinations of racism were enrolled in multiple courses that repeatedly emphasized "the message that Whites are privileged and made connections between the individual and society as a whole" (p. 158). This led her to conclude that investigations into White identity, White privilege, and White racism should become fundamental aspects of *all* teacher education courses. In Groff and Peter's (2012) study of preservice teacher field experiences, the authors echoed

this imperative to weave coursework and discussions about White racial identity throughout the curriculum. Teacher educators concerned with multicultural matters have also underscored the necessity of infusing investigations of Whiteness programmatically across teacher education programs (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Sleeter, 2008).

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the clear call to interrogate Whiteness across the teacher education curriculum, there is a paucity of research related to the infusion of Whiteness investigations in methods courses, and the infusion of Whiteness in literacy methods courses is wholly undeveloped. While attention to developing culturally responsive teaching practices in literacy methods courses provides a foundation for this type of work (Xu, 2000), a clear focus on the relationship between Whiteness and developing literacy teaching methods in the preservice classroom is absent. Furthermore, there is no research documenting the effects of a growing awareness of Whiteness on literacy teaching in practice. In a review of critical and qualitative research in education, King (2008) noted that researchers who interrogated the discourse of Whiteness did not report on the impacts of actual practice. This was in spite of an earlier invocation from Sleeter (2001) that called for multicultural research to follow preservice teachers from their coursework into the classroom in order to see the influence of multicultural content on teaching decisions. This dissertation seeks to meet these gaps in knowledge by studying an infused literacy course and then proceeding to investigate the literacy teaching practices of two interns during their student teaching placements following the course.

Purpose of the Study

Given the need for a greater understanding of the relationship between Whiteness and literacy methods in the preservice classroom, I turned my attention to the Block III course where Susan and Diane were collaborating to infuse interrogations of Whiteness into their literacy methods course. This course and the subsequent student teaching opportunities it provided for the preservice teacher interns allowed me to explore the interns' development as they moved through three different positions: (a) the beginning of the course which revealed their incoming attitudes and beliefs, (b) the course experience which documented their receptivity to investiations into Whiteness and literacy, and (c) the student teaching experience which explored the influence of Block III on two interns' efforts to implement literacy instruction. Table 1 indicates how the two-phase design of this case study captured these three developmental positions.

Table 1

Purpose Reflected in Study Design

Context	Purpose
Phase One: Block III Course	1. To determine the interns' attitudes and understandings at the beginning of the course 2. To learn what happens when interns investigate Whiteness in the course
Phase Two: Student Teaching	3. To understand interns' implementation of literacy instruction during student teaching

The first phase of the study focused on the Block III literacy methods course where 24 White preservice teacher interns were preparing for student teaching experiences in diverse classrooms. At the beginning of the course, I learned about the interns' attitudes, beliefs, and understandings of Whiteness and literacy from two

assignments they submitted to Diane and Susan: a cultural autobiography and a paper on their "big understandings" of literacy. During this phase I also attended the day-long class sessions with the interns every Monday and Wednesday for the duration of the six-week course enabling me to learn what happened when they encountered investigations of Whiteness in the Block III literacy methods course.

During the second phase of the study, my research explored the way two focal interns enacted culturally responsive teaching practices in their literacy work with children during student teaching. I conducted observations and interviews with their mentor teachers in order to understand the context of their student teaching placements. In addition, I observed literacy lessons, conducted interviews, corresponded via email, and conducted a focus group session with the interns during their student teaching placements. This enabled me to glimpse the interns' thinking about literacy teaching, the relationship between course ideas and their literacy instruction, and the supports and constraints related to culturally responsive literacy teaching that they encountered in the student teaching classroom.

My Stance as Researcher

I did not expect to write a dissertation about race and literacy. However, when I watched Diane and her teaching partners implement the invitations about Whiteness with Block III students, I was perplexed and captivated by the complexities such an infusion brought to the course and to my own racial identity and considerations of literacy. As I worked to determine why I was so transfixed by Diane's efforts in Block III, I paused long enough to realize that learning more about the intersections of literacy and race was significant in my personal and academic journey as a teacher educator.

A turning point in my personal journey that propelled me toward this academic investigation of race and literacy occurred during my senior year of high school. I was walking across the school parking lot to my dilapidated (but still functional) Chevrolet station wagon. As I walked, I watched the chaos of my inner-city school dismissal like it was a movie playing before my eyes. I saw my middle-class, White peers congregate by the cars while the African American, Hispanic, and less well-to-do White students boarded the buses. Even though we attended an urban school, my car-driving peers and I were participants in a magnet program – which essentially created a school-within-a-school experience for us.

As I watched the students scatter that day, it struck me that even though we all attended the same school, we had vastly different educational experiences and life chances because of the color of our skin and our socio-economic statuses. That instance propelled me to become a teacher. I attended college and majored in elementary education. Hoping to level the playing field for all children, I interviewed for and received a position in an urban-fringe district with a racially, ethnically, and socio-economically diverse student population. Thus, I began my teaching career in a 2nd and 3rd multiage classroom with a highly diverse student population. One of my greatest desires in my early years of teaching was to help all of the children in my class become literate; however, I found myself recreating literacy experiences that worked for some of my students, but not for all of them, especially not all of my students of color.

As my educational journey continued, my own sense of failure to make literacy relevant for *all* of my students continued nagging at me. When I attended the Critical Perspectives of Whiteness class with Diane, literacy teaching and race became connected

for me. I saw that I carried my Whiteness into the literacy curriculum and into my interactions with children. This made me wonder if making Whiteness visible to preservice teachers in literacy methods courses would help prepare them for literacy work with diverse learners.

Because I had a strong desire to learn more about the connections between Whiteness and literacy teaching, I positioned myself on the periphery as Diane began incorporating Whiteness into her Block III courses. I assisted in the creation of invitations for Diane's first infusion efforts and presented at a conference with Diane and Susan the following semester. To my surprise, my interest in the Block III course led me to this prolonged study of Diane and Susan's work with the interns.

Though I hope this study works to combat the effects of Whiteness in literacy teaching, I also recognize that I am a White storyteller, and nearly all of the characters in my tale are White. Consequently, I feel it necessary to acknowledge the paradox of my position. Even though I am trying to interrupt White dominance, I am at the same time a beneficiary of it. Marx and Pennington (2003) captured the essence of this dilemma when they noted that some aspects of Whiteness are visible to White individuals who are working to interrupt White dominance, but many aspects are yet invisible. Therefore, it may be difficult to see the particular ways that I reinforce and live into White privilege even while trying to deconstruct it.

Theoretical Assumptions and Literacy Beliefs

As an educator influenced by classroom experience and doctoral reading, I entered this study with the following theoretical beliefs and assumptions:

Our schools have a deep need for transformationist teachers.

Transformationist teachers are those individuals who teach and lead in such a way that more of their students, across more of their differences, achieve at a higher level, without giving up who they are (G. R. Howard, 2006). I believe that transformationist teachers are the ideal practitioner in today's highly diverse and stratified society – the potential end-point for the Block III interns in years to come.

Literacy learning is inherently social.

Literacy interactions are learned behaviors that develop through the socialization of children in their specific communities (Heath, 1996). Different communities have different ways of interacting with and valuing language and texts. Consequently, people are socialized into particular language and literacy patterns. Children develop literacy practices as they come to understand the expectations of the social group in which they find themselves (Barton & Hamilton, 1998), and they learn to recontextualize literacy understandings as they move between home and school contexts (Dyson, 1997).

Literacy cannot be separated from ideologies and relations of power in society.

Language and literacy act on and are acted on by power relationships in society (Faircough, 2001). Literacy practices are not neutral; they are imbued with ideologies (Street & Street, 1991). While literacy practices are influenced by power relations, they also have the potential to shape them. Thus, literacy can serve as a site for interrupting domination and making people aware of the underlying social forces, powers, hegemonies, and ideologies that are acting on and through them (Freire, 2000). Society works through literacy, but literacy in turn shapes society.

Unexamined Whiteness perpetuates inequality in education.

Schools are social structures that perpetuate systemic and structural inequities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). When teachers enter classrooms without examining the way their own racial identity positions them in relation to their students, the curriculum, and society, they are likely to teach in ways that maintain the status quo.

Knowing and doing are intricately connected aspects of teaching, but they are not mirror images of each other.

Theory and practice are two components of teaching that are meant to be mutually informative, but such is not always the case. Exposing preservice teachers to theories that can help them think through their practice is critical, but living theory into action is not an easy feat for anyone, particularly teachers who are new to the field. Jack Whitehead's (1989) notion of living contradictions reminds us that teaching practices often fail to reflect theoretical commitments.

Research Questions

The theoretical assumptions listed above shaped the presentation of the research questions for this study. Though there is one central research question, the subquestions are divided into their relevance to *knowing* and *doing* because this study aimed to capture both components of the preservice teachers' development.

Central Research Question

How does interrogating Whiteness in an elementary literacy methods course shape preservice teacher interns' understandings and influence their visions and implementations of literacy instruction in culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse classrooms?

Knowing Subquestions

- How are preservice teacher interns situated to explore Whiteness in relation to literacy at the beginning of the course?
- What understandings and visions of teaching do preservice teacher interns construct through their interactions with the course curricular activities?

Doing Subquestions

- How do preservice teacher interns actualize literacy instruction in their student teaching placements?
- How does the interns' literacy instruction during student teaching show evidence of course ideas and understandings?
- What supports and constraints do preservice teacher interns experience related to the implementation of culturally responsive literacy instruction?

Definition of Terms

Several terms used throughout the dissertation are defined in this section to calrify meaning.

Interns – I refer to the preservice teachers in Block III as interns. This decision reflects the terminology used by instructors across the teacher education program to describe preservice teachers who have been admitted to the elementary education program and are completing their "block" courses.

Whiteness – Whiteness is a social construct that tends to be described more often than defined (Marx, 2006). An important foundational precept of Whiteness is that race is a socially constructed phenomenon rather than a biological reality. In this way, value is ascribed to Whiteness. It becomes the invisible norm thereby situating what is non-White as different or other. McLaren (1998) describes this process of constructing difference by

explaining that "the act of discrimination itself constructs categories of difference that hierarchically locate people as 'superior' or 'inferior' and then universalizes such differences" (p. 64). By establishing categories of difference, Whiteness displaces blackness and brownness into signifiers of deviance and creates illusions of White superiority.

Whiteness in and of itself is a highly racial discourse, but in this dissertation I take the stance, like Marx (2006), that Whiteness is "an amalgamation of qualities including the cultures, histories, experiences, discourses, and privileges shared by Whites" (p. 6). All Whites are influenced by racial-privileges intertwined with White culture, and these privileges are closely tied to other factors such as socio-economic status, home language, religion, etc. Ruth Frankenberg (as cited in Twine & Gallagher, 2007) explains how Whiteness relates to other social factors: "Whiteness as a site of privilege is not absolute but rather crosscut by a range of other axes of relative advantage and subordination; these do not erase or render irrelevant race privilege, but rather inflect or modify it" (p. 76). This perspective aligns with my understanding that Whiteness is privileged, or centered, along with other idealized social traits whereas the margins contain the socially-constructed "other" or less desirable attributes.

White Privilege – People who are White have advantages in society because of their race, but these are often unrecognized and unexamined advantages to those who benefit from them. Whiteness places people in dominant positions and grants them unfair privileges, while rendering these positions and privileges invisible to White people (Green, Sonn, & Matsebula, 2007). As an artifact of Whiteness, White privilege can also be enacted and

reproduced by individuals who are not White because their lives and mentalities have been shaped – knowingly or unknowingly – by White institutional structures.

Critical Multiculturalism – Whiteness is a broad social construct, but critical multiculturalism is the framework that I use in this study to connect Whiteness with schools and pedagogy. Critical multiculturalism is an epistemology that has four characteristics that make it particularly meaningful for envisioning correlations between Whiteness and education. First, it situates schools as social structures that perpetuate the systemic and structural inequities that exist in society. Second, it concerns itself with praxis and intentionally fuses reflective thinking about social issues with classroom action. Third, it reimagines differences as social constructions that need to be interrogated. Lastly, it demands that teachers examine their own racial identities and their participation in White privilege.

Ideology – An ideology is "a usually taken for granted and tacit set of 'theories' about what counts as a 'normal' person and the 'right' ways to think, feel, and behave" (Gee, 2008, p. 4). We all internalize a system of ideas about the way the world is supposed to work. We generate this tacit framework of thought through our participation in society, and we, in turn, use this framework of thought in society to give order and meaning to the social and political world in which we live (Hall as cited in Darder, 1995).

Culturally Responsive Teaching - Culturally responsive teaching is more an orientation toward teaching diverse learners rather than a collection of teaching strategies (Fairbanks, Cooper, Masterson, & Webb, 2009). Although every definition of culturally responsive teaching is a bit different, Gay (2000) describes culturally responsive teaching as the ability to "use cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and

performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more effective for them" (p. 29).

Invitations – The interns completed multiple invitations during Block III. Invitations are literacy activities that exhibit the following characteristics: student choice, open-ended learning opportunities, social and collaborative experiences, specified directions, texts and other resource materials, a variety of sign systems and media, and a record of evidence of participation (B. Berghoff, personal communication, January 2008). Diane and Carol used invitations to develop intern knowledge about Whiteness but also to model the type of literacy engagements they hoped the interns would use with students.

Transformationist teachers – Transformationist teachers are those who make commitments to teach and lead in ways that affirm student identity, increase their school achievement, and unravel social dominance in ways that inform both what they *know* and what they *do* in their classroom practice (G. R. Howard, 2006).

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the body of literature about Whiteness in teacher education by specifically investigating the results of an infused literacy methods course. In focusing on a content-area methods course, the study provides valuable information for teacher educators who seek to incorporate investigations of Whiteness across the teacher education program. It points to some of the programmatic, pedagogic, and research considerations that should be considered when attempting infusions of Whiteness as theory and practice into methods courses.

Overview of Chapters

The next two chapters further describe the background of this study. Chapter 2 introduces the theoretical foundations that underpin my study, and Chapter 3 outlines the work I did as a researcher. It explains the research site and participants in greater detail, describes the research process itself, and explains the analysis processes I used to generate findings.

The findings are presented as three chapters. Chapter 4 explores the interns' positioning to encounter intersections of Whiteness and literacy at the beginning of Block III. Understanding the interns' positionality offers a more informed perspective for viewing the interactions that take place in the course which are reported in Chapter 5. Chapter 5 describes the interns' interactions with Whiteness-infused content in Block III, focusing on the awareness work the interns did and the conceptions of literacy teaching they generated as a result of the course curriculum. Chapter 6 tracks two interns from their Block III experience into their student teaching placements to consider how emerging conceptions of culturally responsive literacy instruction are implemented and shaped by their student teaching contexts during student teaching placements. Findings and implementations are presented for each chapter. Chapter 7 concludes this dissertation study with a synthesis across the chapters of the findings, implications, limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Numerous teacher education scholars (e.g., Barnes, 2006; Darling-Hammond, 2001; Hollins & Guzman, 2005; G. R. Howard, 2006; Richert et al., 2009; Sleeter, 2001, 2008) recognize the pressing need to prepare the predominantly White preservice teaching force for culturally and linguistically diverse student populations. Such scholars are working to identify, modify, and transform the experiences and learning opportunities of future teachers so that they will not simply reproduce teaching practices that are failing to bridge the race-based achievement gap. Teacher education programs need to prepare transformationist teachers (G. R. Howard, 2006) – teachers who have the attitudes and teaching capacity to work successfully with students of color. G. R. Howard explains that transformationist teachers are:

> passionate and vigilant in our[their] efforts to expand the arena of our[their] own personal and political consciousness, to unravel the roots of dominance that continue to stifle achievement in our[their] classrooms, and to create schools that are worthy of our[their] students and compatible with the highest values of democracy. (p. 136)

Transformationist teachers embody culturally responsive teaching because they combine knowing with doing. Their self-awareness and critical social consciousness drive their instruction. They are aware of the interconnections between self, school, students, and society (Darling-Hammond, 2002) and strategically consider how to situate themselves and their students in order to make learning opportunities more just and equitable for all students. Transformationist teachers are moved to action through a critical sociocultural consciousness that reflects a deep understanding of teaching and learning as well. In addition to a passion for equity, transformationist teachers have rich content-area knowledge and pedagogical strategies that undergird their classroom instruction. Though

preservice teachers cannot possibly have the knowledge and experience required to be transformationist teachers, infusing critical multiculturalism into a literacy methods course creates possibilities for preservice interns to become culturally responsive literacy teachers, and equally important, emerging transformationist teachers as described by G. R. Howard (2006).

This study is informed by a combination of theories which frame multicultural education as both a social and critical undertaking. The first theory introduced in the chapter, sociocultural theory, frames all learning as a cultural undertaking. While sociocultural theory explains the social nature of learning, it fails to consider the inequitable social conditions that influence learning. Thus, critical multiculturalism is the main theoretical framework that brings this critical vantage point to this study. Frameworks of culturally responsive teaching and critical literacy theory are also discussed for their relevance to anticipated and potential pedagogical outcomes. The principles of each theoretical framework are now presented in greater depth.

Sociocultural Foundations

Sociocultural theory and pedagogy recognize that all learning is influenced by the social, cultural, and historical factors that surround children as they learn (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). The foundations of sociocultural theory are attributed to Vygotsky (1978), who emphasized that learning is highly social and mediated by the individual's culture. By emphasizing the significance of student culture in learning, sociocultural theory and pedagogy provide a foundational framework that weaves in and amongst the multiple theoretical perspectives and constructs that consider the teaching and learning of diverse student populations. As T. C. Howard (2010) explains, "Sociocultural

theory…serves as a fundamental lens for understanding how culture contributes to learning and human behavior" (p. 56-57). Because sociocultural theory plays a vital – but often tacit role – in educating culturally diverse learners this section briefly addresses several key features of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory as identified by Smith, Teemant, and Pinnegar (2004): a) learning is social, b) teaching is assisting, c) knowledge is cultural understanding and competent participation, and d) performance is situative.

Learning Is Social

Vygotsky (1978) surmised that children learn as a result of their social interactions with others and that learning is contextualized within activities that require cognitive and communicative functions. Smith, Teemant, and Pinnegar (2004) explain that "individuals actively construct personal understandings and abilities by way of cooperative interaction and negotiation of shared meanings in social contexts" (p. 39). In other words, children develop higher mental processes because they first co-construct them during shared activities with a more knowledgeable other. It is only through these social interactions that children can internalize these new processes as part of their own cognitive development (Woolfolk, 2007).

Teaching Is Assisting

In a sociocultural view of education, teaching does not involve transmitting knowledge from a teacher to a student, rather teaching means helping students arrive at new understandings through social activity. Vygotsky (1978) claims that real learning occurs in the zone of proximal development which rests in between what a person can do independently and the level of development they can achieve with the support of an adult or in collaboration with more capable peers. Children learn during experiences within the

zone of proximal development because others' provide scaffolding (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Scaffolding offers students assistance that helps them stretch beyond what they could do independently, but it is not permanent. As the student becomes more confident, the more knowledgeable other gradually removes the scaffolding and releases the activity wholly to the student.

Knowledge Is Cultural Understanding and Competent Participation

The learning process requires the use of signs, symbols, and other cultural tools and artifacts (e.g., language, patterns of reasoning, customary practices, and beliefs). Children learn how to use these tools from the people around them with whom they interact. Kozulin & Presseisen (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007) explain that children "appropriate," or take for themselves, the ways of thinking and acting modeled by others in their cultural group. It is through their engagement with cultural elders that children generate their understandings of the world (Smagorinsky, 2013). Thus, all knowledge is culturally situated. Competent participation in different social groups, communities, and cultures requires knowledge specific to that group.

As institutions grounded in White, middle-class ways of being, schools – in general – do not typically account for the various forms of cultural knowledge that children bring with them to the classroom. Thus, the culture of schools serves some better than others and frequently alienates children who are unable to overcome the cultural differences (Smagorinsky, 2013). However, teachers who recognize that children bring varied cultural signs, tools, and artifacts to school are more likely to "structure pedagogical practices that are more accessible for students who come from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds" (T. C. Howard, 2010, p. 57).

Performance Is Situative

Vygotsky espoused that learning leads development (Wink & Putney, 2002). Children's cognitive development occurs develops as they learn to use signs, symbols, and cultural artifacts. Thus, teaching must always consider not only the child's actual developmental level but also their potential level of development.

Vygotsky's theory shows that when individuals first encounter new performance tasks they must have the assistance of more knowledgeable others to accomplish these tasks. Gradually, the individual progresses to a stage where he self-assists and finally moves to automatization where he can successfully perform the task without self-regulation or the assistance of others. However, de-automization occurs when a new learning task or performance in an unfamiliar situation is beyond the learner's present development and causes them to require self-regulation or assistance from others for success (Tharp & Gallimore, 1989). In this way, the individual and his environment are deeply interrelated (Smith, Teemant, & Pinnegar, 2004). Performance is situative because a student may be able to successfully perform a task independently in a given setting whereas changing the environment or task may result in the student's need for further assistance from others in order to achieve success. Therefore, teachers must offer children a variety of contexts in which to express learning.

The influence of environment on teaching and learning is quite significant when considering the relevance of culture in learning as well. In his writing about sociocultural theory, Vygotsky (1997) described how "the educational process [is] an active one on three levels: the student is active, the teacher is active, and the environment between them is active" (p. 54). Every environment is a social environment. Even though it may

appear neutral, there are always definite social elements present. I refer to the environments created between the student and teacher throughout this dissertation as "active spaces" and add considerations of curriculum as an integral piece of this environment. Student performance is situated in these "active spaces" that exist where teachers, students, and the curriculum intersect.

Summary

Sociocultural theory provides a basic foundation for understanding educational issues (Tharp, 1997). Yet, sociocultural theory also presents limitations. One limitation of sociocultural theory is that, by definition, it does not present a critical perspective. Sociocultural theory depicts knowledge as culturally constructed, but it does not ask questions about whose knowledge is valued, who has access, what power relations are maintained or deconstructed by the knowledge, etc. In fact, one critique of sociocultural research and theory is that it does not attend closely to issues of power, identity, and agency (Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Consequently, sociocultural theory used in isolation cannot help preservice teachers understand how power, identity, and agency influence the cultural construction of knowledge. Thus, we have now reached a point where critical theory can help illuminate the social nature of learning.

Critical Multiculturalism as a Theoretical Framework

Critical multiculturalism is a stance toward education that aligns principles of multicultural education with critical pedagogy. As such, it is concerned with what gives rise to race, class, and gender inequalities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Its ultimate purpose is "to empower students and transform schools and society for greater freedom, equality, and justice within the contextual realities of cultural pluralism" (Gay, 1995, pp.

180-181). Critical multiculturalism provides a philosophical framework for educational reform. As such it is probably better understood as a framework for understanding and conceptualizing schooling in a diverse society rather than as a protocol for implementing school change.

Sleeter and McLaren (1995) refer to critical multiculturalism as a "standpoint epistemology" (p. 7) because it advocates particular types of actions and social interests. Unabashedly committed to principles of social justice and egalitarianism, critical multiculturalism strives to "refuse, resist, and transform existing structures of domination primarily in school sites" (p. 28). It interrogates constructions of difference and rejects the notions of cultural harmony and agreement that are promoted in other versions of multiculturalism (McLaren, 1995).

There are several reasons for relying on critical multiculturalism as a framework for this study. First, it locates inequalities in social structures and commonly held ideologies. Second, critical multiculturalism is concerned with issues of conscientizção and praxis, both important considerations as I look at the connections between consciousness-raising and teaching practices. Third, it does not ignore or romanticize issues of difference but rather considers how to create spaces where differences can co-exist. Lastly, it demands an exploration of Whiteness in teacher education. The following section briefly addresses each of these key concepts in critical multiculturalism, and is followed by a section on relevant research.

Key Concepts in Critical Multiculturalism

Schools as social institutions. Critical multiculturalism defines racism and classism as systemic, institutionalized practices. In this view, schools are not neutral

institutions that provide everyone with equal opportunities to learn and succeed. Rather, schools are social structures that serve to reproduce current social hierarchies. McLaren and Sleeter (1995) explain it in this way:

> The dominant culture of schooling mirrors that of the larger culture in so far as teachers and students willingly and unwittingly situate themselves within a highly politicized field of power relations that partake of unjust race, class, and gender affiliations. Within such a culture, individuals are differentially enabled to act by virtue of the social, cultural, and institutional possibilities afforded them on the basis of their race, class, gender, and sexual orientation. (p. 6)

Schools are not level playing fields. They are affected by the power relationships in society that position people in different ways. In schools, forces of race, class, and gender create a multi-level playing field on which students gain a sense of their options and negotiate their educational and economic possibilities (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Individuals have different opportunities for success based on the way they are positioned. This understanding directly contradicts notions of individualism and meritocracy which contend that individuals single-handedly have the power to rise above the constraints of culture and history and that success results from an individual's talents and abilities rather than class privilege or wealth.

Schools are not structured so that all students can achieve through hard work and determination. For example, in traditional school settings, Latino students must assimilate to the cultural norms and standards of the English-speaking culture in order to succeed, yet many cultural, class, and linguistic barriers prevent such assimilation thereby inhibiting their active participation and successful movement through the educational system difficult (Darder, 1995). This example shows schools as social institutions that perpetuate inequities through the transmission of common sets of ideologies and beliefs

that result in educational decisions that impact learners. Because schools frequently pass along common ideologies, they mimic the lines of thinking that – though commonly accepted in society – serve to maintain oppressive systems.

Conscientizção and praxis. In order for preservice teachers to see schools as contested public spaces shaped by forces of power (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997), they must engage in conscious reflection on self and society. Like critical pedagogy, critical multiculturalism draws largely from the work of Paulo Freire. For Freire (2000), the process of conscientizção – the awakening or increasing of consciousness – is the first step in promoting an antioppressive, liberatory pedagogy. For change to occur, the oppressors and the oppressed – that is those who hold the power and those who are oppressed by that power – must unveil the world of oppression and commit themselves to transforming it. "An individual who has gained such a consciousness understands how and why his or her political opinions, socio-economic class, role, religious beliefs, gender role and racial self-image are shaped by dominant perspectives" (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997, p. 23). Preservice teachers must be critically conscious themselves in order to subsequently position their students to recognize the forces of power that shape their identities and personal empowerment.

Conscientizção is the beginning of praxis. The process of raising one's consciousness to the ideologies that one previously accepted unquestioningly as normal changes the way one acts in and toward the world. According to Freire (2000), "Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world. In these relations consciousness and world are simultaneous: consciousness neither precedes the world nor follows it" (p. 81). Praxis

consists simultaneously of action and reflection. Awareness of oppression should coincide with action. Thus, critical multiculturalism views preservice teachers as individuals whose teaching actions should reflect a consciousness of social inequities and systems of dominance. McLaren and Sleeter (1995) refer to this as a praxis of liberation and social justice. A teacher's decisions should empower students to overcome social barriers by exploring different ways of understanding the world, resisting oppression, and creating visions of democratic communities. Ultimately, teaching should make learning part of the learner's struggle toward social justice (Giroux, as cited in Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997).

Difference. Another tenet of critical multiculturalism is its refusal to see culture as non-conflictual, harmonious, and consensual (McLaren, 1995). Instead, critical multiculturalism celebrates difference as beneficial and works to create spaces where differences can co-exist. Critical multiculturalism rejects the romanticized notion that racial groups possess fixed characteristics. Instead, it advocates for working to make differences visible so that we can analyze the ways group differences are structured by power relations (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). Celebrating differences also means acknowledging that there are many versions of reality. It involves using the histories, stories, and cultural narratives of the oppressed to reshape official knowledge – to challenge the perspectives, assumptions, and structuring metaphors of the traditional curriculum.

A pedagogy of Whiteness. One of the most important ways that critical multiculturalism frames my study is in its commitment to deconstructing White supremacy. Critical multiculturalism examines Whiteness, its privilege, normativity, and

erasure. It compels White people to rethink their understanding of their own ethnicity and their construction of their consciousness (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). As McLaren (1995) explains, "This is crucial because unless we do this – unless we give white students a sense of their own identity as an emergent ethnicity – we naturalize whiteness as a cultural marker against which otherness is defined" (p. 50). A pedagogy of Whiteness, therefore, is defined by three features: a) understanding the positionality of Whiteness, b) identifying and abandoning the practice of White racism, and c) developing a critical and progressive White identity (Kincheloe & Steinberg, 1997). For preservice teachers, this means confronting the culture of Whiteness and the privilege it bestows, considering the overt and covert racist thinking that influences their actions, and walking through the messiness of identity work that occurs when racial identities are unsettled. Each of these features defining pedagogy of Whiteness are described below.

Confronting Whiteness and White Privilege. Critical multiculturalism calls for an examination of Whiteness. Since Whiteness is a socially constructed phenomenon, it is constantly in flux and open to critique and redesign. Critical multiculturalism calls for those who benefit from being White to become aware of the unequal positioning that benefits them. It challenges them to abandon the myth of meritocracy (Lewis, 2003, 2004; McIntosh, 1990) and recognize their privilege as a social construction. McLaren (1995) explains:

> White groups need to examine their own ethnic histories so that they are less likely to judge their own cultural norms as neutral and universal. The supposed neutrality of white culture enables it to commodify blackness to its own advantage and ends. It allows it to manipulate the other but not see this otherness as a white tool of exploitation. Whiteness does not exist outside of culture but constitutes the prevailing social texts in which social norms are made and remade. (p. 50)

In the spirit of Freire, Maher and Tetreault (1997) further explain that Whiteness needs to be named and actively resisted in order to invoke change.

Racism in teaching. There are a variety of ways to be racist in teaching. As Bonilla-Silva (2002) explains, discriminatory racial practices rely largely on a new racial ideology that is more covert than overt. This "colorblind racism" avoids direct racial discourse but safeguards racial privileges nevertheless. Because preservice teachers are not overtly racist, they may fail to recognize the prejudices inherent in their own thinking. Furthermore, they may consider their prejudices as harmless thoughts that barely connect to racism (Marx, 2006). Another significant way that racism enters classrooms is through colorblind teaching. When teachers claim that they are colorblind, they deny the important role that race and ethnicity play in children's identities and in learning. They are unable to see the lived realities of their students who do not experience school or the curriculum as a culturally neutral enterprise (TDSi the Teaching Diverse Students Initiative , n.d.). Finally, it is imperative to remember that teachers perpetuate racism simply by completing teaching responsibilities compliantly. When teachers do not actively resist the social and institutional forces of racism that infiltrate their classrooms, then students will continue to experience discrimination.

Racial identities. When preservice teachers are confronted with Whiteness and White privilege, they have to resituate their ideas of who they are. Identities are socially constructed. Nowhere is this more evident than in an individual's sense of racial identity. Several theories of racial identity development exist in the social science literature (Carter, Cross, Helms, and Tatum as cited in G. R. Howard, 2006). These models indicate that race is a social construct rather than a biological reality, and they present

several stages through which an individual may progress when considering his or her identification as a member of a particular racial group.

While models of racial identity development are important in gauging individual growth, G. R. Howard's (2006) model of White Identity Orientations proved most useful in this study as a tool for situating interns' understandings because it focused on the thoughts, emotions, and behaviors of educators. G. R. Howard's model describes three different White identity orientations: fundamentalist, integrationist, and transformationist. Different indicators combine to describe each orientation. Although the goal is movement from one orientation to the next, the strength in this model is the use of descriptions of ways of being White that are presented as indicators for each orientation.

In a fundamentalist orientation, individuals are committed to an assumption of White supremacy and a single-truth reality. They rationalize White dominance and often do not see themselves as racial beings. Committed to the rightness of their perspectives, they may profess a stance of colorblindedness and respond to discussions about their own racism with anger, denial, or defensiveness. From a curricular and pedagogical standpoint, they are committed to an assimilationist doctrine that elevates a monocultural, Eurocentric approach to teaching and curriculum content.

Individuals in the integrationist orientation acknowledge the existence and legitimacy of others (G. R. Howard, 2006). They have begun the process of interrogating Whiteness and may see the historical consequences of White dominance, but they continue to tacitly accept notions of White superiority, see injustice as the victim's problem, and fail to recognize the contemporary consequences of White dominance. Though curious about other races and cultures, they continue to distance themselves from

racism on personal and emotional levels. In this orientation, individuals apply an additive and contributions approach to teaching (Banks, 2004). This means that they will include some multicultural content in the curriculum, but only as an addition to the content already in place, not in an effort to question, contradict, or replace existing content.

Transformationist educators are self-reflective, authentic, antiracist, and comfortable with multiple realities. They challenge the legitimacy of white dominance yet claim a positive connection to white racial and cultural identity. Individuals in this orientation rely on empathy and respect to guide their views of those who are culturally different from them and Whites who are not in the same place in their racial identity development. Motivated by a vision of healing and justice, individuals in this orientation are committed to social justice and act to dismantle the dominant paradigm. They seek cross-cultural and cross-racial interactions and see them as essential for growth. Although a transformationist orientation is the desirable destination of this model, it is not the endpoint of the journey. G. R. Howard (2006) argues that the transformationist identity is "an ongoing process of change and growth" (p. 112).

The work of critical multiculturalism is identity work. When critical multiculturalism is infused into a methods course, the teacher educator calls for individuals to examine Whiteness and become aware of themselves as cultural beings. Preservice teachers "do" identity work when they learn how to teach literacy. It is important to consider how this work of identity formation relates to the literacy teaching practices preservice teachers develop in and beyond the course.

Relevant Research

The decision to infuse critical multiculturalism into a literacy methods course and follow preservice teachers into student teaching placements was grounded in an exploration of research in the field of multicultural education. This research has focused on attitudes and beliefs, coursework, and moving theory into practice.

Attitudes and beliefs. Even though research has documented the importance of recruiting and maintaining a more diverse teaching force (Haberman, 1996), teacher educators continue to work with a predominantly White population of preservice teachers who need to develop attitudes and beliefs that support their work with diverse students rather than hinder it. Fortunately, there is growing documentation that preservice teachers have greater receptivity toward issues of diversity and social justice than they have had in the past (Castro, 2010; Milner, Flowers, Moore, Moore III, & Flowers, 2003). Nevertheless, preservice teachers often possess only minimal competence in multicultural education, lacking real understanding of multicultural issues, White privilege, and structural inequalities (Castro, 2010).

In a mixed methods study conducted in a multicultural education course, Middleton (2002) found that preservice teachers "identified a willingness to teach from a multicultural perspective, while simultaneously portraying misunderstanding and misinterpretation of multicultural education, diversity, and the attitudes and skills needed for successful cross-cultural teaching" (p. 348). Weisman and Garza (2002) drew similar conclusions when they administered a pre- and post-course survey with open-ended questions to 158 preservice teachers enrolled in a multicultural education course. Though the course helped students become more positive about diversity by making them aware

and accepting of differences, most participants in the study "continued to attribute educational problems to the individual rather than to oppressive factors within society" (p. 32).

Coursework. As teacher education programs work to prepare preservice teachers for culturally responsive teaching, they largely rely on multicultural courses and fieldwork. In many cases, programs incorporate a single multicultural course aimed at raising preservice teachers' consciousness of their own biases, bringing to light existing inequality, and helping preservice teachers consider how they, as teachers, can promote social change (Weisman & Garza, 2002). Programs may also include field experiences in school or community settings, which if designed appropriately, can have positive effects on preservice teachers' attitudes about culturally diverse students (Sleeter, 2001). Regardless of the effectiveness of a field experience or multicultural course, preparing preservice teachers to teach in diverse settings cannot be accomplished with a single course, field experience, or student teaching placement (Lawrence, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; Weisman & Garza, 2002). For this reason, there is growing recognition that issues of Whiteness ought to be examined when infused throughout an entire teacher education program rather than housed within individual courses.

From theory to practice. Preservice teachers face great challenges when trying to carry understandings from college courses into their teaching, and very few studies actually address this connection between multicultural coursework and teaching. Vavrus (as cited in Sleeter, 2008) found that White student teachers in Iowa modeled themselves after their cooperating teachers rather than incorporating understandings from the multicultural course, and Lawrence (1997) interviewed three student teachers and found

that the philosophies and worldviews of the cooperating teachers strongly influenced the teaching practices of student teachers. Smith (2000) followed two preservice teachers from his multiculturally-infused social studies methods course into their student teaching placements and found that the one student teacher with prior diversity experiences used culture as a pedagogic tool in relating to students and designing lessons whereas the student teacher who lacked these experiences did not draw upon the students' culture.

Overall, the research demonstrates the challenges of incorporating critical multiculturalism into teacher education programs. Issues of Whiteness, privilege, racism, structural inequities, and difference can help preservice teachers develop critical multicultural consciousness that leads to informed, equitable teaching practices. However, critical multiculturalism must be also connected to content-area teaching practices and not simply addressed in an isolated and add-on multicultural course.

Summary. Fusing critical multicultural content into a literacy methods course challenges preservice teachers to consider many issues that are exceedingly relevant in today's society including: Whiteness, privilege, power, dominance, and difference. The hope of critical multiculturalism is that considering these factors in relation to self, students, school, and society may change the way preservice teachers see themselves, society, and their responsibilities to their students. Although the dispositions addressed in critical multiculturalism frame a particular stance toward education, they offer a more theoretical perspective on the role of teaching than a pedagogical perspective for teaching diverse learners. Because this study considers how critical multiculturalism interacts with content-area instruction to prepare culturally responsive literacy teachers, it is important to understand how culturally responsive instruction is actualized in classrooms.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

Culturally responsive teaching is a branch of multicultural education with a strong focus on pedagogy, defining the conditions and practices for optimizing learning for culturally and linguistically diverse learners. However, it is not simply a collection of teaching methods, rather it is a comprehensive set of knowledge and skills. T. C. Howard (2010) highlights the multiple dimensions involved in culturally responsive teaching:

> Culturally responsive pedagogy embodies a professional, political, cultural, ethical, and ideological disposition that supersedes mundane teaching acts; it is centered in fundamental beliefs about teaching, learning, students, their families, and their communities, and an unyielding commitment to see student success become less rhetoric and more of a reality. Culturally responsive pedagogy is situated in a framework that recognizes the rich and varied cultural wealth, knowledge, and skills that students from diverse groups bring to schools, and seeks to develop dynamic teaching practices, multicultural content, multiple means of assessment, and a philosophical view of teaching that is dedicated to nurturing student academic, social, emotional, cultural, psychological, and physiological well being. (p. 67-68)

As T. C. Howard indicates, many different factors situate the pedagogical considerations associated with culturally responsive teaching.

Culturally responsive teaching emerged from a series of successive educational efforts to respond to racial tensions in U.S. society and continues to evolve as researchers and practitioners seek to evaluate its effectiveness in helping culturally diverse students improve academically. Beginning in the 1940s and 1950s, an educational reform movement known as "intergroup education" was established in response to the mass movement of African Americans from the South to the North during World War II (Banks, 1979). This movement attempted to reduce racial and ethnic prejudice by promoting factual knowledge about different minority groups but ultimately failed to become institutionalized on a large scale and essentially ended when grant funding

diminished. A response to race riots in the 1960s signaled the beginning of the multiethnic movement which brought about new efforts to introduce ethnicity as an integral part of the school curriculum. While this movement forced educators to address issues of race and culture, it also prompted a clash in ideologies between cultural pluralists and assimilationists. Cultural pluralists believed that the main goal of education should be to help a child function more successfully within his own culture while assimilationists wanted public institutions to socialize students into a common culture (Banks, 1977, 1979).

In spite of this ideological clash between pluralists and assimilationists, Banks (1977, 1979) explains that the 1970s brought progress in multiethnic education. For example, early multicultural educators asked teachers to examine their own cultural assumptions and beliefs in order to consider what made it difficult to teach children not like themselves. There was new widespread recognition that ethnicity affected learning. Furthermore, the suggestion that sociocultural values, norms, and behaviors should be incorporated in the curriculum was being taken seriously (Gay, 2000).

In the late 1980s, Ladson-Billings (1992, 1995a, 1995b) built upon the atmosphere created by the multiethnic movement in order to generate a framework for culturally relevant teaching. She designed her framework based on observations of and conversations with eight teachers who were noted for their success in teaching African American students. Following Ladson-Billings' work, several other educators published documents related to culturally responsive teaching that focus more broadly on all groups of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Over the years, several different terms have been used in the professional literature to describe culturally responsive teaching,

including *culturally embedded, culturally appropriate, culturally congruent, culturally mediated, culturally sensitive, culturally relevant, culturally compatible, culturally responsive,* and *culturally synchronized teaching* (T. C. Howard, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 1995a).

As interest in culturally responsive teaching has grown, several different scholars have contributed broad frameworks outlining components of culturally responsive teaching, with slight differences in focus across frameworks. While all culturally responsive teaching frameworks aim to develop closer and more meaningful connections between students' home and school cultures (Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Lee, 1992), no universal definition of culturally responsive teaching exists, rather a conglomeration of insight from both researchers and practitioners informsour understandings.

Although many versions of culturally responsive teaching exist, Table 2 summarizes five different frameworks for culturally responsive teaching. The first four frameworks (Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b; Villegas & Lucas, 2002, 2007; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) self-identify as culturally responsive or culturally relevant teaching frameworks, whereas the final framework (Cochran-Smith, 2004) is published as a set of principles for teaching for social justice. I elected to include this additional model with the culturally relevant frameworks for three reasons. First, it draws from the literature about multicultural teacher education. Second, it overtly addresses issues of power and privilege, which is a strength not included in all frameworks. Lastly, it parallels critical multiculturalism in envisioning culturally responsive teaching as teaching for social justice. As Table 2 indicates, the creators of these frameworks take slightly different stances toward the purposes of culturally

responsive teaching, such as student empowerment (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, 1995b), student motivation (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995), teaching for social justice (Cochran-Smith, 2004), or teachers (Gay, 2000) and teacher educators (Villegas & Lucas, 2002, 2007) designing culturally compatible curricula. These stances situate the elements of the frameworks and explain why the criteria vary from one framework to another.

Table 2

Frameworks for Culturally Responsive Teaching

Contributor	Stance	Criteria
Ladson-Billings (1995a, 1995b)	Culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy of opposition committed to collective empowerment	1) Demands, reinforces, and produces academic excellence in students 2) Utilizes cultural competence as a vehicle for student learning and develops students' cultural competence 3) Develops students' critical consciousness in order for them to challenge the status quo of the current social order
Wlodkowski and Ginsberg (1995)	For culturally different students, engagement in learning is most likely to occur when they are intrinsically motivated to learn	1) Establishes inclusion – creates a learning environment in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another 2) Develops attitude – creates a favorable disposition toward the learning experience through personal relevance and choice 3) Enhances meaning – creates challenging, thoughtful learning experiences that include student perspectives and values 4) Engenders competence – creates an understanding that students are effective in learning something they value
Gay (2000)	The academic achievement of ethnically diverse students will improve if taught through own cultural and	1) Develops a knowledge base about cultural diversity 2) Includes ethnic and cultural content in the curricula 3) Demonstrates cultural caring and builds learning communities 4) Establishes cross-cultural communications

Contributor	Stance	Criteria
	experiential filters	5) Responds to ethnic diversity in delivery of instruction
Villegas and Lucas (2002, 2007)	A framework of culturally responsive teaching should guide the infusion of multicultural issues throughout teacher education programs	1) Is socioculturally conscious – recognizes people's realities are shaped by their location in the social order; sees connection between schools and society 2) Has an affirming attitude toward children from culturally diverse backgrounds; recognizes and rejects deficit perspectives and sees students' backgrounds as resources 3) Sees self as responsible for and capable of bringing about change that will make schools responsive to all students 4) Understands how learners construct knowledge and is capable of promoting learners' knowledge constructions 5) Knows about the lives of their students 6) Uses knowledge of students' lives to design instruction that builds on what they already know while stretching them beyond the familiar
Cochran-Smith (2004)	To alter an educational system that is dysfunctional for children who are not part of racial and linguistic mainstream, teachers should teach for social justice	1) Enables significant work within a community of learners 2) Builds on what students bring to school with them – knowledge and interests, cultural and linguistic resources 3) Knows how and where to help students connect what they know to what they do not know and use prior skills to learn new ones 4) Works with (not against) individuals, families, and communities 5) Makes inequity, power, and activism explicit parts of the curriculum

Both collectively and individually, these frameworks help define what teachers know and *do* in order to teach in ways that honor and validate children's cultural backgrounds and personal experiences. The key component uniting and binding these

culturally responsive frameworks together under a common label is their focus on the teacher's knowledge of students' cultural backgrounds and the use of this knowledge as a vehicle for student learning. Although the language varies from one framework to another, all five of the frameworks described above incorporate this criterion.

Culturally responsive teaching, as described in these frameworks, argues that teachers need to know their students and their backgrounds. The teacher has the responsibility of helping students understand how they can draw from their cultural experiences to achieve academically, but knowing a student's cultural background is just one piece of knowing the learner. Teachers need to get to know learners individually and tailor instruction based on these more complete pictures of their students. In the words of Cochran-Smith (2004), culturally responsive teachers "build on what students bring to school with them" (p. 69). Teachers need to know the variety of resources that children possess based on their knowledge, interests, experiences, and culture to incorporate them in learning experiences. Furthermore, it is essential for teachers to understand how students learn and to have a firm grasp of the types of pedagogical knowledge and skills that they can use to maximize student learning (T. C. Howard, 2010). In short, culturally responsive teachers seek out information about students' lives. They design curricula, instruction, and learning experiences that incorporate students' backgrounds.

Culturally responsive teaching frameworks situate the work teachers must do in order to teach "*to and through*" the strengths of their students (Gay, 2000). Connecting teaching to the students' backgrounds is a common criterion among all of the frameworks, but there is some divergence that occurs beyond this point of commonality. First, pedagogical expertise is one characteristic that is only explicitly present in the

frameworks developed by Villegas and Lucas, Gay, and Cochran-Smith. Another divergence is attention to community. The Wlodkowski/Ginsberg and Cochran-Smith frameworks both mention the need for the teacher to build a community of learners whereas other frameworks do not address this topic. Third, only a few of the frameworks attend to a teacher's sociocultural consciousness, meaning that they are aware of structural inequities in society, recognize schools' roles in perpetuating inequities, and understand the consequences of Whiteness. Sociocultural consciousness is omitted from the frameworks contributed by Gay and Wlodkowski and Ginsberg, but the remaining three frameworks – those of Ladson-Billings, Villegas and Lucas, and Cochran-Smith – offer criteria that address sociocultural consciousness in some way.

As these frameworks evidence, culturally responsive teaching is an evolving field. Practitioners and researchers are continuing to add to this body of knowledge that aims to produce more just and equitable learning experiences for all students. Therefore, in considering the different frameworks described, it suffices to say that they all contribute to our growing understanding of culturally responsive teaching, yet may individually fall short of capturing all of the pedagogical possibilities and mindsets involved in culturally responsive teaching. In his writing about culturally responsive pedagogy, T. C. Howard (2010) determined that five key principles underlie culturally responsive pedagogy:

1. The eradication of deficits-based ideologies of culturally diverse students.
2. The disruption of the idea that Eurocentric or middle-class forms of discourse, knowledge, language, culture, and historical interpretations are normative.
3. A critical consciousness and sociopolitical awareness that reflects an ongoing commitment to challenge injustice and disrupt inequities and oppression of any group of people.
4. An authentic and culturally informed notion of *care* for students, wherein their academic, social, emotional, psychological, and cultural well-being is adhered to.

5. A recognition of the complexity of culture in which educators allow students to use their personal culture to enhance their quest for educational excellence. (p. 70)

Taken collectively, the five frameworks presented in Table 2 incorporate all of these key principles and provide a more complete lens for viewing and interpreting teaching practices.

Critical Literacy

Critical literacy theory offers a conceptual framework for literacy teaching and curriculum that aligns general principles from critical multiculturalism with literacy teaching and learning. Critical literacy theory is concerned with the political aspects of literacy education and the ways that schooling reinforces inequalities (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). Teaching literacy in a way that responds to the needs of linguistic and culturally diverse students means equipping them to combat the inequities they face in schools and society at large.

The ultimate goal of critical literacy work, like that of critical multiculturalism, is equity and social justice (Janks, 2010). However, critical literacy relies on literacy instruction as a means to accomplish this end. Critical literacy theory enters this study in two distinct ways. First, this theory posits that literacy is inherently embedded in social contexts which are influenced by issues of power and dominance in society. Second critical literacy theory offers visions of teaching which position literacy as a tool for personal and social transformation. In this sense, literacy is a vehicle for moving between knowing and doing.

Literacy and Power

Language is part of social processes and practices. As such, it comes imbued with ideologies from the social contexts in which it is generated (Bakhtin & Voloshinov,

1994). Although language exists within social practices, it also functions to name and shape the social. Language *acts on* and *is acted on by* power relationships in society (Fairclough, 2001). In the words of Ernest Morrell (2008):

> Language is a constructed and non-neutral entity…those who teach (and learn) language and literacy must also work to make themselves aware of the various social, ideological, cultural, and political contexts in which the languages and literacies of power operate. (p. 5)

Thus, all texts are steeped in power. They contain messages and perspectives that reflect the political landscape in which they were constructed. In his describing his ideological model of literacy, Street (1984) illuminates this view: "It [literacy] is a social process, in which particular socially constructed technologies are used within particular institutional frameworks for specific social purposes" (p. 97). Thus, literacy is a social product that arises from the political and ideological conditions of a particular community. Therefore, reading and writing must be regarded as highly contextualized, interwoven into local ways of life, and sensitive to ideological complexities of time and place (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). Literacy is inherently social, and as such, it is intricately connected with power dynamics in society.

The connections between literacy and power play an important role in literacy learning. To begin with, critical reading involves seeing that the word and the world are inseparable (Freire & Macedo, 1998; Freire & Macedo, 1987). One cannot separate words from the reality of what they describe. This means that words are always contextualized by their meanings in the world, and they are always reflective of the ideologies and powers that work in and through the word and the world. As Meyer and Manning (2007) explain, "Critical Literacy involves comprehension, of course, but all comprehension is rooted in power and position, thus it is political" (p. 140). Raising the

consciousness of individuals to the ideologies embedded in texts is an essential component of critical literacy. Making people aware of the underlying social forces, powers, hegemonies, and ideologies that are acting on and through them is a key goal of critical literacy.

Possibilities for Transformation

Because critical literacy attends to power dynamics, literacy instruction in this tradition offers hope for transformation. Transformation is the remaking of what already exists into something new. Not only does critical literacy interrupt the social messages encapsulated by texts, but it also offers learners the potential to "rewrite" or "redesign" the social future (Freire & Macedo, 1998; Janks, 2010; Kamler, 2001).

Critical literacy theory describes how the processes of reading and writing critically change those who engage in these practices and provide opportunities to design new social futures (New London Group, 1996). Critical literacy is a pathway to social redesign that begins with the understanding that texts are social constructions, but it does not end there. Morrell (2008) asserts: "Not only must these citizens understand these constructions, but they must also intervene in them; they must speak back and act against these constructions with counter-language and counter-texts" (p. 5). An informed reading of the word and the world should lead to informed, transformative action in the world (Morrell, 2008).

When Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) synthesized the goals and objectives of critical literacy, they described four dimensions of critical literacy pedagogy that might assist teachers in implementing a critical literacy curriculum: (1) *disrupting the commonplace,* (2) *interrogating multiple viewpoints,* (3) *focusing on sociopolitical issues,*

and (4) *taking action and promoting social justice*. The primary characteristics of these interrelated dimensions are described below.

Disrupting the commonplace. Adopting a critical viewpoint means looking at the "everyday" through new lenses. In terms of disrupting the commonplace within a literacy curriculum this means:

- Considering how cultural and historical influences have shaped all aspects of life including the experience of schooling (Shor, 1987)
- Developing a language of critique (Shannon, 1995) that can be used to disrupt what is considered normal by asking new questions, seeing everyday issues through new lenses, demystifying naturalized views of the world, and visualizing how things might be different (Giroux as cited in Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008)
- Interrogating texts by asking questions about the author's intentions and what they want readers to believe (Luke & Freebody, 1997)
- Examining how social norms are communicated through popular culture and media
- Addressing real-life issues where classroom engagements are grounded in the lives and interests of students (Freire, 2000)

Disrupting the commonplace is an important starting point for teachers who are engaging in critical literacy work with children. The teachers, along with their students, must develop new ways of seeing and questioning the world around them.

Interrogating multiple viewpoints. This dimension of critical literacy recognizes that considering various viewpoints concurrently produces a richer and more complete understanding of an issue. In this dimension, critical literacy teachers engage in the process of:

- Juxtaposing and reflecting on multiple and contradictory textual accounts of an event (Luke & Freebody, 1997)
- Seeking out texts that give voice to those who have been silenced or marginalized (Harste, Breau, Leland, Lewison, Ociepka, & Vasquez, 2000)
- Making difference visible (Harste et al., 2000)

By incorporating these processes in their teaching, critical literacy teachers create open-ended inquiries that do not yield neat and tidy conclusions or have a "right answer."

Focusing on sociopolitical issues. Teaching is not a neutral practice, yet teachers rarely consider how "sociopolitical systems, relationships, and language are intertwined and inseparable from our teaching" (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002, p. 383). In this dimension, critical literacy involves:

- Challenging the legitimacy of unequal power relationships, questioning existing hierarchies, and examining social structures that keep power in the hands of a few (Lewison, Leland, & Harste, 2008)
- Analyzing how language is used to maintain domination (Fairclough, 2001)
- Using literacy to engage in the politics of daily life (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993)

This dimension encourages teachers to consider the influence of sociopolitical systems on people's perceptions, responses, and actions.

Taking action and promoting social justice. Literacy can be used to make efforts toward achieving social justice. This dimension relies heavily on understandings and perspectives gained from the other three dimensions, and it involves:

- Engaging in *praxis* – a reflection on social inequity that leads to action upon the world in order to transform it (Freire, 2000)

- Inviting students to use critical social practices to rewrite their identities as social activists who challenge the status quo and demand changes (Leland & Harste, 2000)
- Deconstructing texts and reconstructing them in ways that "speak back" and "act against" constructions of injustice (Janks, 2010)
- Using language to exercise power to enhance everyday life and to question practices of privilege and injustice (Comber, 2001)

Teachers enacting a critical literacy curriculum invite students to take action related to the issues in their lives. As Meyer and Manning (2007) explain, "The goal [of critical literacy] is for children to begin to understand the complexity of social justice so that they might feel a sense of agency in their lives" (p. 142).

Summary

Critical literacy theory offers hope for a just and equitable literacy pedagogy that affords students agency in making and remaking themselves and the world in ways that honor and legitimize their cultural, racial, and economic differences. It shows that literacy is a situated practice that is inherently embedded in the social. This means that literacy learning is intricately connected with issues of power and dominance in society. When literacy is situated as an act of taking up, disrupting, and transforming discourses, then it has the potential to make and remake selves, identities, and relationships (Lewis & Moje, 2007). With this recognition comes the hope for social transformation through literacy instruction.

Transformationist Pedagogy: A Framework for Analysis

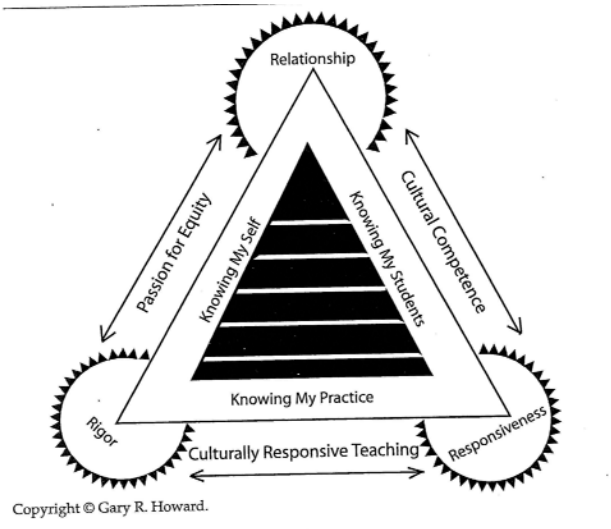
The four theoretical frameworks described in this chapter connect different perspectives for looking at preparing literacy teachers who are able to enact culturally

responsive teaching practices that interrupt White dominance. In order to tie these theories together as a framework for my analysis, I want to return to the image of a transformationist teacher discussed in the introduction of this chapter.

In his book *We Can't Teach What We Don't Know*, G. R. Howard (2006) outlines the characteristics of a transformationist teacher and presents a model of transformationist pedagogy (see Figure 1). His transformationist pedagogy model makes visible the connections between what transformationist teachers *know* about their practice and what they *do* in their classrooms. In G. R. Howard's model, the teacher's knowledge of self, teaching, and students are all connected and all equally valued. When self, teaching, and students are connected in this way, changes in one area impact the others, and knowing informs doing.

Figure 1

G. R. Howard's (2006) Model of Transformationist Pedagogy



The triangle in the middle of the model consists of three different dimensions of knowing necessary to be effective in educational equity work: knowing my self, knowing my practice, and knowing my students (G. R. Howard, 2006). The corners of the triangle

represent dimensions of action. G. R. Howard refers to these dimensions as "doorways" because they connect what we know with what we do (e.g., responsiveness occurs when a teacher knows the needs of her students and has the pedagogical expertise to adequately meet those needs). The final component of G. R. Howard's model is the overlay of the transformationist ideals of a passion for equity, culturally responsive teaching, and cultural competence around the outside of the triangle. As a complete model, a transformationist pedagogy is the place where a passion for equity intersects with cultural competence and leads to culturally responsive teaching.

G. R. Howard's model of transformationist pedagogy depicts the space where the four theoretical lenses presented in this chapter intersect. A transformationist teacher has a passion for equity that is grounded in a deep awareness of Whiteness and inequity. She is culturally competent and knows how to translate knowledge about her students' lives into culturally responsive teaching practices. Furthermore, she has concrete content-area knowledge and pedagogical practices – in this case a familiarity with critical literacy principles – that enable her to align social action objectives with literacy instructional practices.

G. R. Howard's transformationist pedagogy model illustrates the way transformationist teaching is grounded in praxis. This study is guided by the assumption that knowing and doing are intricately connected in transformationist teaching. Thus, the interns' incoming understandings as well as those developed from the course set the stage for future teaching actions. In the same breath, the student teachers' actions reflect their knowledge about Whiteness, culturally responsive teaching, and literacy instruction.

Summary

This chapter introduced four key frameworks that informed this study. Sociocultural theory, critical multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching, and critical literacy illuminate what it means to be a culturally responsive literacy teacher. These theoretical frameworks come together in G. R. Howard's (2006) image of a transformationist teacher which allows us to envision the meaningful ways that "knowing and doing" should collide if culturally responsive literacy teaching is going to interrupt White dominance and make learning more just and equitable for all students. The next chapter describes the methodological choices that I made as a researcher as I sought to understand the development of culturally responsive teaching practices in the college classroom and beyond. Together these frameworks inform how interrogating Whiteness in an elementary literacy methods course shapes preservice teacher interns' knowing and doing in literacy instruction for culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse students.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODS

In order to understand how infusing principles of critical multiculturalism into a literacy methods course shaped the interns' understandings and implementations of culturally responsive literacy instruction, I employed a case study design consisting of two phases. In the first phase of the study, I studied a literacy methods course where investigations of Whiteness were intentionally infused into the course content. The second phase of the study looked more intentionally at the student teaching practices of two of the interns from the college course. This design drew on the characteristics of qualitative research and employed ethnographic methods within a case study framework. Not only does this chapter delve into the methodology of my research study, but it also describes the college course in which I conducted the research study as well as the data collection techniques and analysis strategies I used.

Study Design

The case study approach allowed me to explore issues within a single, bounded system. I worked over time, using detailed, in-depth data collection procedures involving multiple sources of information to develop a case description and case-based themes (Creswell, 2007). By providing multiple sources of data over an extended period of time (Barone, 2004), the case study framework allowed me to develop an in-depth, close-up view of the preservice teachers' responses to curricular activities that incorporated investigations of Whiteness in their literacy methods course.

The decision to conduct a case study was not a methodological choice but rather a choice of what was to be studied (Stake, 2000). Within the case study framework, I relied upon ethnographic research methods to guide my data collection and analysis.

Ethnographic research recognizes that all human behavior is framed within a sociopolitical and historical context and, therefore, uses culture as a lens through which to view and interpret data (Purcell-Gates, 2004). According to Tedlock (2000), "Ethnography involves an ongoing attempt to place specific encounters, events, and understandings into a fuller, more meaningful context" (p. 455). Ethnography is carried out within the natural setting of the classroom and relies heavily on researcher field work. In addition, the data collection and analysis is inductive, interactive, and recursive. Data analysis involves generating description, identifying themes, and interpreting textual data (Creswell, 2008).

The case study design that I implemented draws from a social constructivist worldview (Creswell, 2009). Social constructivism is founded on several philosophical assumptions according to Crotty (1998): humans construct meaning as they engage in the world thus meanings are varied and multiple; humans make sense of the world based on their historical and social perspectives; and the generation of meaning is always social. The goal of constructivist research is to look for the complexity of participants' views rather than narrowing them to a few ideas (Creswell, 2009). In this research scenario, I entered a classroom space where the interns and instructors had different social experiences that positioned them in relation to the course content. The individuals in the course constructed meanings in this space as they interacted socially and as they brought their own understandings to the course content. As a researcher working in a constructivist paradigm, I sought to understand the context through visiting and gathering information personally, and I was careful to reflect upon the ways my own socially-constructed views positioned me to see and interpret the data I collected.

Nature of Qualitative Research

A case study is a form of qualitative research. I employed this approach because qualitative research offered possibilities for gaining a deep understanding of the interns' response to the infusion of critical multiculturalism in their methods course. To begin with, qualitative designs are naturalistic (Patton, 2002) meaning that the research takes place in real-world settings. Furthermore, the researcher is a vital instrument in qualitative research because he or she personally gathers the information from the participants (Creswell, 2009). The researcher actively gathers a variety of empirical materials, or data, and deploys a wide range of interconnected interpretive practices to understand the subject matter at hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000). Then the researcher works inductively to build patterns and themes in order to interpret what was seen and heard in the field. Throughout this process, the qualitative researcher attempts to adhere to the participants' meanings about the phenomenon rather than imposing his or her own meaning to the situation. This requires the researcher to be reflective about the way his or her background may be impacting the study (Creswell, 2009).

In addition, qualitative research relies heavily on the notion of emergent design. Qualitative research, though planned, is not prescribed. The researcher should expect to adapt the inquiry as his or her understanding deepens or the situation changes. Emergent design allows qualitative researchers the flexibility to pursue new paths of discovery as they emerge (Patton, 2002). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) state, "The design of a naturalistic inquiry (whether research, evaluation, or policy analysis) *cannot* be given in advance; it must emerge, develop, unfold…" (p. 225). Finally, what emerges, develops, and unfolds in qualitative research is a holistic view of a phenomenon. Qualitative

research investigates the complexities of issues and attempts to present the many factors involved in a situation, generally sketching the larger picture (Creswell, 2009). These characteristics of qualitative research guided the research decisions that I made throughout my study.

Role of the Researcher

My role as a researcher grew out of my past experiences with Block III instruction as well as my relationships with the instructors, Diane and Susan. Early in my doctoral program, I was a teaching assistant in one of the sections of Block III. Consequently, I was familiar with the content and objectives of the course. In addition, Diane and I had attended doctoral courses together and developed a collegial relationship as well as a friendship. Diane introduced me to Susan the semester before the study, and we met twice that semester to prepare for a conference presentation and several additional times before the study to discuss the course curriculum.

Because of my previous experience with Block III and my collegiality with Diane and Susan, I took a very collaborative stance toward the research process. There are many different understandings of collaborative research in education, but I prefer to draw from the understanding of collaboration outlined by Ulichny and Schoener (1996) which defines collaboration as "determining mutual goals for the research, sharing responsibility for the research product, and building a trusting relationship that permitted interdependence and mutuality between teacher and researcher" (p. 496). Diane, Susan, and I were all positioned to provide valuable, and overlapping, contributions to the research study. We were co-researchers and at times co-instructors for the course. This does not mean that we had equal responsibilities for all aspects of course instruction and

the research that occurred therein, but it meant that we engaged in these processes with each other and were constantly aware of how our actions impacted each other's work.

My collaboration with Diane and Susan was an important component of my role in the study. I collaborated with them extensively in planning and evaluating the effectiveness of the infused course activities. At times, I acted alongside them as an instructor. I participated in large group discussions, visited interns to discuss course content as they were working, and at times led small group discussions related to course readings. In much the same way, Diane and Susan took on some of the responsibilities of a researcher. They asked questions about their practices and the interns' responses. They envisioned interns' assignments and class contributions as data and helped me to gather and organize coursework. They shared observations and insights about course activities and the interns' experiences or class work. In addition, they acted as a sounding board for my initial analyses and observations.

My collaboration with Diane and Susan was beneficial for all of us, but our collaboration would have been incomplete without the participation of the interns in the course. The interns were participants in the study, but they were also teachers with valuable information to share. We encouraged them to ask and investigate their own questions and to envision teaching as a form of research which required them to constantly collect and analyze data from students to determine the effectiveness of their own teaching practices. This stance invited the preservice teachers to be reflective participants who asked questions about themselves, the course content, teaching, and the world. Thus, as Damico (2003) described, the instructors, the preservice teachers, and I were co-inquirers, co-planners, co-teachers, and co-participants. Although we all had

distinct roles, these roles overlapped and intersected throughout the study in ways that demonstrated our interdependence.

This collaborative stance positioned me as a highly engaged participant observer in the course. As Tedlock (2000) explains, participant observation was originally forged as an ethnographic method for data collection whereby a researcher attempted to be both an engaged participant and a "cooly dispassive" observer. The goal of participant observation was to yield an "objective" account of a culture or experience. In more recent years, the emphasis on objectivity has fallen away to a more realistic vision of participant observation as a subjective view where the researcher is responsible for being reflective about the way his or her background and biases enter into the study. However, the term still remains fairly nebulous. According to Patton (2002), "The extent of participation is a continuum that varies from complete immersion in the setting as full participant to complete separation from the setting as spectator, with a great deal of variation along the continuum between these two end points" (p. 265).

For me, being a participant observer meant that I had a unique position within the course. I had access to participant experiences and conversations from an intern perspective and an instructor perspective. As a researcher, I benefitted from this dual positioning. While I collaborated with both interns and instructors throughout the course, I held neither role officially thus granting me a "neither and both" status that allowed me to operate fluidly in the classroom space.

Although I had expected to become a non-participant observer when my study transitioned into the student teaching phase, I actually found myself much more involved in the preservice teachers' experiences than I had originally intended. My original

intention had been to observe them in the classroom and solicit their thoughts without providing them support or feedback. Instead, I found that they solicited feedback from my visits to their classrooms. They wanted to receive ideas for improving their teaching or questions to ponder. When they sent me an email or if we had a conversation, they longed for a response and wanted me to comment on their thoughts. These interactions helped me to establish trusting relationships with the participants. Even though I did not use these interactions to coach them on making their literacy instruction more culturally responsive, it is certainly possible and perhaps even likely that my comments and suggestions, in fact just their cognizance of being a study participant during the student teaching phase, raised their level of awareness and impacted the ways they were thinking about teaching or the work they actually did with students.

Creating Conditions for Possibilities

As typical in qualitative studies, I employed the technique of purposeful sampling in selecting a case to study. Because I wanted to understand the way the preservice teachers' thinking and teaching were impacted when a critical multicultural dimension was infused into their literacy methods courses, I elected to conduct this study in a classroom setting where I knew the curriculum had been continually evolving in an attempt to address both literacy methods and critical multicultural perspectives – including issues of Whiteness.

The Block III methods course was a required course for all undergraduate preservice teachers majoring in elementary education. There were several different sections of the course available each semester, but the particular class I studied consisted of two full-day classes each week for a period of six weeks. The Block III course had a

strong focus on literacy, with one component aimed at assessing students as readers and writers and another focused on adapting literacy instruction to meet the needs of all learners. During the six weeks of coursework, the interns completed a weekly field placement in the classroom where they would be conducting their student teaching. Following the six weeks of classes and field experience, the interns completed an eight-week paired student teaching assignment, meaning that two interns student taught in a single classroom under the guidance of a single mentor teacher. They were supposed to reconvene for a final class session after student teaching, but due to weather-related school closings, the class was canceled.

Block III was an established course at the university and as such it had a well-defined structure and curriculum. The course predominantly relied on a sociocultural approach to teaching and learning, and attended largely to the principles that learning is social and teaching is facilitating (Smith, Teemant, & Pinnegar, 2004; Vygotsky, 1978). The course established community-building and collaborative learning structures as foundational components of the literacy classroom. It also emphasized the role of the teacher in facilitating student learning. According to the course syllabus, literacy teachers should be able to recognize and support students' individual literacy development in order to continually expand what learners know and can do. In addition, literacy teachers must know how to assess students' literacy abilities and plan instruction specific to the needs to the learners. Although the Block III instructors in the study were familiar with critical literacy practices and modeled them at different points throughout the course, critical literacy was not taught explicitly in Block III and did not influence the Block III curriculum to any significant degree. Although Block III's curriculum was

generally consistent across the various sections of the course, Diane and Susan did have some autonomy over the content and teaching methods they used.

Diane and Susan were intentional about incorporating critical stance into Block III by infusing content that incorporated principles of critical multiculturalism into the literacy methods course. In one of our summer planning sessions, Diane, Susan, and I worked with an instructor from another section of the course to develop a cognitive ladder – a planning tool used to help refine the goals and objectives for the course (see Appendix A). The guiding question for the cognitive ladder was, "How can I be the best literacy teacher for all students?" In order to help preservice teachers become the best literacy teacher for all students, we agreed that the preservice teachers needed to make several moral commitments. They needed:

- To learn about, appreciate, and make connections to each student's unique "funds of knowledge" developed through their lived experiences.
- To take responsibility for making every interaction with children purposeful and supportive of their learning.
- To expect and support children in making and remaking their identities through literacy.
- To interrupt the dominant cultural assumptions and systems of racism and classism that privilege some learners over others.

In order to make these moral commitments accessible to the interns, we identified four main concepts that would drive the classroom curriculum: cultural identity, Whiteness (white dominance), systemic racism and classism, and learning differences. The two main

avenues we anticipated using to address these concepts were readings with accompanying in-class discussions or online reflections and literacy invitations.

Readings

Infusing course content into an established methods course brings about new challenges and tensions for course instructors (Gort & Glenn, 2010). While Diane, Susan, and I made a concerted effort to include curricula that matched the objectives laid out in our cognitive ladder, many of the course readings did not directly align with these objectives. For the most part these were texts or topics that had been part of the course for multiple semesters and were used widely across sections regardless of the instructors. As I write now, it is easy to see how these readings could have been adjusted to better match the goals for infusion, but, at the time, we were mainly focused on integrating new content particularly aimed at interrupting Whiteness.

Although the course readings did not all support our infusion efforts, *Choice Words* (Johnston, 2004) and *Because We Can Change the World* (Sapon-Shevin, 2010) – two foundational texts used across all course sections – were actually very explicit in addressing issues of difference and student agency. In addition, Appendix B lists all course readings and describes the course readings and discussions that specifically connected teaching to issues of race, culture, difference, and privilege.

Invitations

Invitations provided another vital way of inviting preservice teachers engage with components of critical multiculturalism in a literacy-based format (See Appendix C). There were several reasons we decided to infuse critical multiculturalism into the course through invitations. First, invitations provided a multisensory opportunity for the interns

to engage with some challenging components of Whiteness. Using active learning strategies was important to us because Sleeter's (2008) meta-analysis of multicultural education demonstrated that active learning strategies work best for preparing preservice teachers to work with culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Invitations challenged the interns to experience and engage with ideas in a more personal way. Second, invitations provided a space where we could introduce high quality children's literature to the preservice teachers. In this way, they could familiarize themselves with different texts they might use effectively in classrooms comprised of culturally and linguistically diverse learners. Third, the invitations modeled a type of literacy activity that is accessible to all learners. It was our hope that the interns would recognize that, in spite of people's different backgrounds and literacy levels, invitations offered everyone a chance to participate with their peers and grow in their language and literacy development. Lastly, though we designed the invitations for adult learners, we wanted them to understand that invitations could be modified for use with younger learners. Invitations can provide opportunities to deal with real-world, critical issues and topics in age-appropriate ways. Table 3 provides a brief course overview of the infused content.

Table 3

Timeline of Significant Infused Readings and Course Activities

Date	Class Session	Relevant Readings and Course Activities
Aug 23	1	First class; Interns participated in writing workshop with collection of multicultural poetry books
Aug 25	2	Read and discussed first half of "Preparing White Teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation." Submitted revised cultural autobiographies. Continued working with multicultural texts in writing workshop.
Aug 30	3	Read ENL readings and posted responses to online discussion forum. Continued working with multicultural texts in writing workshop.

Date	Class Session	Relevant Readings and Course Activities
Sept 3	4	Read "Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race," discussed, and posted expectations for class discussions. Read and discussed "Discarding the Deficit Model." Continued working with multicultural texts in writing workshop.
Sept 6	5	Virtual Class (Labor Day) Read more ENL articles and posted responses to online forum.
Sept 8	6	Read and discussed second half of Preparing White Teachers.
Sept 13	7	Completed invitations in class.
Sept 15	8	Read and discussed "Disproportionate Representation of African Americans in Special Education." Completed invitations in class.
Sept 20	9	Nothing specific
Sept 22	10	Culturally Responsive Teaching in-class reading and jigsaw activity.
Sept 27	11	Course-to-teaching reflection and small group conversations.
Sept 29	12	Explore the Teaching Tolerance website and post responses in forum.
Oct 4 - Dec 3		Student Teaching
Dec 13	13	Virtual Class (weather-related) Virtual reflection on student teaching experience. Read and responded to "Diversity vs. White Privilege: An Interview with Christine Sleeter" in online forum.

Research Site and Participants

This study included 24 preservice teacher interns enrolled in the Block III methods course. All of these participants were first semester seniors majoring in elementary education at a large, Midwestern university situated in an urban center. This particular teacher preparation program worked diligently to prepare a predominantly White group of preservice teachers to student teach and possibly find teaching positions in the urban schools within the city limits. Most of the participants commuted to class from nearby suburban or rural areas; however, a few drove to class from their homes in

the city. Twenty of the preservice teachers in the study were female and four were male. They ranged in age from 20 to 51 with the average age being 26 years old. All of the students in the class were White which was beneficial from the standpoint that White students are more likely to share their real opinions about race and racist attitudes when everyone in the class is White (Case & Hemmings, 2005). However, it also meant that the class lacked the presence of racially and ethnically diverse minority students who could offer alternative perspectives and experiences.

The interns attended the Block III course in an elementary school in an increasingly diverse urban school district on the northeast side of the city. In the past ten years, the socio-economic foundation of the district had changed dramatically. District demographic documents revealed that only 23.2% of students received free or reduced lunch in 2000. By 2010, that number increased to 50.8%. Not only did the income level of students change, but the racial composition of the school district also shifted noticeably. As Table 4 demonstrates, the White student population diminished significantly while other races grew in representation creating a major demographic shift in the school district. In spite of the changing student population, the teaching force in the district remained largely White at 86.5% during the year of the study.

Table 4

District Demographic Information

	Academic Year 2001-2002	Academic Year 2010-2011
White	61.2%	40.1%
Black	29.2%	38.7%
Hispanic	4.0%	10.8%
Multiracial	3.6%	7.6%

Recognizing the need to prepare teachers to work with an increasingly diverse student population, the district had implemented three professional development initiatives focused on equity work: Beyond Diversity training programs with the Pacific Education Group, building level equity teams, and CARE teams designed to help teachers engage in action research related to equity issues. The district appeared to be an ideal place for this study because of their professional commitments. It was my hope that, in an era of testing pressures and mandated curriculum, the district's professional commitments might provide encouragement and support to the interns in their efforts to implement culturally responsive teaching strategies during student teaching.

A Closer Look at Practice

For the second phase of this study, I selected four preservice teachers from the class to follow into their student teaching. I selected these interns because they demonstrated an interest in being culturally responsive literacy instructors during Block III. These interns were not necessarily the top academic performers in the class; they were simply interns who interacted with course curricular materials in a way that made me curious to see how they would transfer ideas from the course into their student teaching placements.

While I collected data from all four of the student teachers, this dissertation only describes the teaching experiences of two of them, Amanda and Rebekah. I share the stories of Amanda and Rebekah because their experiences were the most different among the focal interns I studied. They were placed at different schools in the district, one on the east side of the district and the other on the west side. Both elementary schools enrolled students from first thru sixth grades because the district had a centralized

kindergarten program. Rebekah's school was slightly larger with 713 students whereas Amanda's school enrollment was 588. Table 5 presents the student demographics from each school. As the table indicates, both interns worked with ethnically, linguistically, and socio-economically diverse student populations; however, the experiences of the interns were also influences by classroom level demographics, perceived student ability levels, and mentor teacher attitudes all of which are discussed further in Chapter 6.

Table 5

Student Demographics

Student Ethnicity	Percent of School Population	
	Amanda	Rebekah
Black	40%	49%
White	39%	24%
Hispanic	7%	15%
Multiracial	14%	9%
Asian	0.3%	1%
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0%	0.4%
Lunch Status	Amanda	Rebekah
Free Meals	46%	70%
Reduced Meals	13%	12%
English Language Learners	7%	11%

Data Collection

Data collection for this study took place in two phases. The first phase primarily focused on student *knowing* while the second phase provided the student teaching context for application of knowledge, or *doing*.

Phase One

The first phase of data collection occurred during the Block III course. During this time, I collected multiple forms of data aimed at determining how the interns were

developmentally positioned at the beginning of the course and how they responded to the investigations of Whiteness integrated into the course.

Researcher Notes. As a participant observer in the course, I took fieldnotes during class time. I was intentional in noting descriptive details as well as my own reflective notes (Creswell, 2008). The descriptive details provided a record of the events, people, and activities I observed whereas my reflective notes allowed me to record personal thoughts that captured insights, highlighted the relevance of observed actions to my study, and provided a space for documenting emerging questions and themes. In addition to the in-class fieldnotes, I also wrote or audio-recorded a daily reflection following each class session.

Audio-Recordings. When the interns engaged in whole class conversations, I used audio recording devices to capture their discourse. In doing so, I collected six complete large group conversations related to assigned course readings. I also attempted to collect audio-recordings of the invitations. However, because there were so many groups during invitations, the interns were responsible for recording their own conversations. Though I tried to make sure all of the groups were recording their invitation conversations, they did not always do so. Collectively the interns completed 24 invitations over the course of two days, but I only have recordings from 16 of those invitations. Lastly, I recorded a set of four instructor-guided small group conversations based on an in-class freewrite assignment that was reflective in nature.

Course Assignments. The interns completed multiple assignments for the Block III course. I made photocopies of all hard copy assignments the interns submitted. They also completed postings to an online forum which I was able to access via the Internet

during the semester. I also copied and pasted the online postings into Word documents to retain access to them beyond the semester. In addition, the interns completed various in-class assignments that I collected and photocopied. They wrote two reflective pieces, one was a short reflection about invitations and the other was a longer written response to the prompt: "Explain how course readings, conversations, and invitations will impact your teaching. Think specifically about culture, race, whiteness, and privilege." In addition, most days Diane and Susan asked them to leave an "exit card" which was an index card on which the interns anonymously wrote thoughts, feelings, reactions, questions, suggestions, etc. related to the day's experience. I entered the exit card comments into an Excel document to make it more accessible for analysis.

Course Documents. I collected copies of all of the documents Diane and Susan used in the course including the course calendar, syllabus, invitations, readings, and any handouts distributed in class.

Artifacts. When the interns participated in the invitations, they created a number of products that reflected their experiences with the content, and they often talked about these products in their reflections and the large group debriefs following invitations each day. Because product-creation was an integral part of the invitations, their products reflected the sense-making work while engaged with the invitations in class.

Phase Two

In the second phase of the study, I focused on the interns in their student teaching contexts. The data from Phase One informed my understanding of these interns, but I also collected a new data set particular to their student teaching experiences.

Classroom observations. I conducted observations of both the mentor teachers and the interns. I observed the mentor teachers' literacy block one time for 90 minutes prior to the interns assuming teaching responsibilities. The purpose of this classroom observation was to see the mentor work with students and to see the types of literacy practices on which they relied. Having this baseline understanding of the literacy instruction in the classroom was important in situating the interns' teaching experiences. In addition to a single observation of the mentor teachers, I observed the interns for 60 minutes at three different points during their instruction: when they first assumed full teaching responsibilities, mid-way through their placement, and near the end of their placement. Although we planned the observations in advance, I encouraged the interns to teach as they normally would and not to modify their lesson content because I was observing. My intention was to see how the course influenced the interns' overall literacy instruction rather than evaluating their ability to plan a culturally responsive lesson just for my visit. While my observations were informed by critical multiculturalism, culturally responsive teaching, and critical literacy, I simply recorded descriptive and reflective notes during each observation, which serve as the observation data.

Interviews. Interns and their mentor teachers both participated in semi-structured interviews with me. The interns spoke with me at the completion of the Block III course prior to beginning their full-time teaching responsibilities. The mentors spoke with me a bit later in the semester after the interns had assumed full teaching responsibilities. The interviews varied in length from approximately 30 minutes to one hour, but in each case

they provided valuable information about the individuals' thoughts about teaching and diversity. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Focus Group Session. The four interns initially selected for this phase of the study participated in a focus group session to talk about their experiences at the end of their student teaching placement. This session was also audio-recorded and transcribed.

E-mail reflections. At the beginning of their student teaching placements, the interns planned to send me weekly e-mail reflections about their experiences in the classroom. I encouraged the reflections by providing prompts. While the interns replied quickly the first week, their response time became noticeably slower as their student teaching responsibilities increased. In order to alleviate some of the pressure they felt, I modified the number and content of the reflections I asked from them. Rather than reflecting each week, the interns completed five reflections over their eight-week placement. For the final two reflections, I had them submit the reflections they had to complete for their student teaching coach. This seemed to streamline their workload, and it allowed me to get a broader perspective on their teaching experiences. Because two of the four interns verbally expressed a desire for feedback in their work and teaching, I always responded to everyone's reflections with questions and comments. This prompted several meaningful e-mail exchanges between myself and one of the interns, Rebekah.

Student work samples. I asked the participating interns to collect work samples from their students that represented their literacy teaching efforts. Although these work samples played a minor role in the analysis process, it was helpful to see the student artifacts that arose from the interns' teaching.

Data Analysis

Naturalistic research does not make absolute distinctions between data gathering and analysis (Patton, 2002). Throughout the Block III course and the interns' student teaching experience, I collected data and engaged in early analytical work. During the course, much of this analytic work was driven by the need to identify focal interns for the second phase of the study. I spent time revisiting my notes and reflections from class, listening to audio recordings, and reading student assignments. I noted significant contributions to conversations and mannerisms in which the interns engaged during course activities that seemed indicative of their receptivity (or resistance) to Whiteness and culturally responsive literacy teaching. This early and ongoing analysis led me to select the focal interns for the study. As those selected interns entered student teaching, my analysis focused more on reviewing data collected from the course to identify ideas and specific activities from the course that appeared to influence the interns' literacy teaching experiences. In general, the analytical processes I engaged in during data collection were exploratory and tenuous since they overlapped with collection. The bulk of my analysis work occurred after the course and the interns' student teaching experiences were complete.

After collecting all of the data, I was able to spend more time immersed in the data and could consider both aspects of the study – knowing and doing. During this time, I reviewed, reorganized, and reread data. I listened to audio-recordings and transcribed the invitations and the intern interviews. I had the large group conversations, instructor-led small group conversations, focus group session, and mentor interviews transcribed for me, so I compared those documents with the original audio files to check for accuracy. I

re-read the intern assignments most relevant to the intersections of culture and literacy. I reviewed fieldnotes and classroom observations and looked at the samples of student work collected from the classroom.

As Richards (2005) explains, "The goal is to learn from the data, to keep revisiting it until you understand the patterns and explanations" (p. 86). Trying to make sense of the big picture and determine the classroom activities and literacy events that were most relevant to the case, I wrote memos about large group conversations and course documents, summarized invitations on notecards, explored the data through the theoretical lenses described in Chapter 2, identified key words and phrases (potential codes) from data at large, and arranged post-it notes with important words and activities, as well as index card summaries, around one large whiteboard in an attempt visualize connections.

As I worked to construct this holistic view, the research questions helped me to consider and represent the developmental process the interns moved through as they progressed from the beginning of the course, to engaging with course curricular activities, and eventally to student teaching. Table 6 presents my research questions, identifies the purpose of each question, aligns data sources with each question, and provides an explanation of why I selected those particular sources for analysis.

Table 6

Research Questions and Data Sources

Research Question	Purpose	Data Sources	Rationale
<u>Knowing 1</u> How are preservice teacher interns situated to explore Whiteness in relation to literacy at the beginning of the course?	To determine the interns' attitudes and understandings at the beginning of the course	Two written assignments 1. Cultural autobiographies 2. Big understandings of literacy	Rich documents provided insight on interns' backgrounds, thoughts about diversity, and literacy teaching
<u>Knowing 2</u> What understandings and visions of teaching do preservice teacher interns construct through their interactions with the course curricular activities?	To learn what happens when interns investigate Whiteness in the course	• Three large group conversations about assigned readings o Richert, et al. (2009) Part 1 o Richert, et al. Part 2 o Blanchett (2006) • Online forum about literacy instruction for English Language Learners • A Day in the Life invitation • Reflective freewrite and accompanying small group discussions	The four structures represent some of the various activities used to infuse content within the course. The three conversations selected dealt the most directly with Whiteness in education and maintained focus on the topic and the text (not tangential). I selected the invitation because it also directly addressed Whiteness and felt the most representative of the types of learning and interactions that were present throughout the whole set of invitations. Both the forum and the freewrite data provided insight into the interns' connections between course ideas and envisioned teaching practices.

Research Question	Purpose	Data Sources	Rationale
<u>Doing 1</u> How do preservice teacher interns actualize literacy instruction in their student teaching placements?	To understand interns' implementation of literacy instruction during student teaching	• Notes from one observation of each intern	I focused the analysis on a small teaching segment that was the most representative of the ways I saw each intern address culture in her literacy teaching across my visits.
<u>Doing 2</u> How does the interns' literacy instruction during student teaching show evidence of course ideas and understandings?		• Intern-specific data from Knowing 2 subquestion • E-mail reflections • Informal conversations • Intern interviews • Focus group session	Each of these data sources contained segments of information relevant to the subquestion.
<u>Doing 3</u> What supports and constraints do preservice teacher interns experience related to the implementation of culturally responsive literacy instruction?		• Mentor observations • Mentor and intern interviews • Intern observations • Informal conversations • Focus group session • E-mail reflections	Each of these data sources contained segments of information relevant to the subquestion.

These research questions also guided the trajectory of my analysis. Although I initially anticipated coding for themes across the data as a whole, I found that the individual questions and their related data sets revealed and promoted the analysis much more than a singular coding approach allowed. However, because my analysis work did involve so much coding of individual data sets, I found it useful to use NVivo software which allowed me to develop a coding tree that I could use across data sets. While many codes were actually specific to an individual data set, others carried over to multiple data sets. In this way, NVivo served as a useful tool for building an expanded coding tree that represented and accommodated the various kinds of data that I collected and analyzed in this study. Though I explored the possibility of grand themes across the data using NVivo, these themes emerged more concretely as I considered the individual analyses within the study. The following paragraphs explain the analysis strategies used to address each research question while concurrently describing the organization of the findings by chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an answer to the Knowing Question One which considers the interns' attitudes and understandings at the beginning of the course. The autobiographies were a rich data source about the interns and their histories of participation (Rogers & Fuller, 2007). I broadly read these documents to look for patterns and themes across the class. I noted key words and phrases on post it notes and organized them to find commonalities and idiosyncrasies across the documents. As for the interns' literacy understandings, I retyped these documents into a Word document which I then coded using NVivo. Because the interns discussed similar ideas in the assignments analyzed in Chapter 4, it was easiest to present the findings in terms of dominant themes, major

themes, minor themes, and idiosyncratic themes. Table 7 describes the criterion for each theme indicator.

Table 7

Theme Indicators and Criteria

Indicator	Criterion
Dominant	Nearly all of the interns' thinking aligned (90% or over)
Major	Most of the interns described the theme (over 50% but less than 90%)
Minor	Some of the interns developed the idea (over 30% but less than 50%
Idiosyncratic	One or two voices developed the idea but it was particularly relevant to the topic (less than 10%)

Chapter 5's analysis addressed Knowing Question Two and provides a glimpse of what happened when the interns investigated Whiteness in the course. In an effort to present a depiction of the interns' course experience, I sought to represent a wide range of course activities. I identified four different structures that played a pivotal role in exposing the interns' to concepts related to Whiteness and connecting cultural considerations with their classroom literacy instruction: large group conversations, online forum discussions, invitations, and a reflective freewrite assignment. After identifying the most meaningful learning experiences within each structure, I analyzed each structure individually expecting to use similar codes across the structures. However, because each structure was unique and the individual data was particular to a given activity, there was great variation between the structures. This led me to reconstruct the themes and write a descriptive summary of the findings from each structure individually. In this way, writing became an integral part of my analysis.

Writing about the themes and findings from each structure individually allotted me the opportunity to look for meaning across them, meaning that was not accessible by coding and seeking broad themes. The work of St. Pierre (2005) supports this notion of "nomadic inquiry." She explains that "a great part of that inquiry is accomplished in the writing because, for me, writing *is* thinking, writing *is* analysis, writing *is* indeed a seductive and tangled method of discovery" (p. 967). The findings in Chapter 5 emerged because, in the words of St. Pierre: "I wrote my way into particular spaces I could not have occupied by sorting data with a computer program or by analytic induction" (p. 970).

The analysis work for Chapter 6 involved sorting, organizing, and compiling relevant data from a variety of sources in order to present a thick, rich description of the interns' student teaching experiences. Analyzing the data from the three Doing Questions helped generate descriptions of the interns that showed their implementations of literacy instruction during student teaching.

Finally, Chapter 7 provides a synthesis of the findings across Chapters 4, 5, and 6. Chapter 7 discusses implications for theory, teacher education practice, and research resulting from the infusion of critical multiculturalism into a literacy methods course.

Trustworthiness

Throughout the research process, I implemented the following strategies to account for the accuracy and credibility of my findings:

1. Triangulation of data: I collected multiple forms of data from a variety of sources. Having multiple sources and modes of data allowed me to compare

and integrate findings across different data types and participants' perspectives.

2. Thick, rich description: I attempted to provide a thorough description of the setting, the case, and the participants in order to enable readers to determine how this work might be relevant to other settings (Stake, 1995).
3. Member checking: I had several opportunities to discuss emergent findings with Diane and Susan both during and after the Block III course. Their feedback at times affirmed my interpretations of the data and at other times pushed me to ask more questions, look more intently, or choose a different path of inquiry. I also had the opportunity to meet individually with each focus intern from the study the semester following the study. During those meetings we discussed my early interpretations of the findings from the course, and they offered insights on the accuracy of those findings.
4. Researcher reflexivity: I know that my own experiences, biases, and thoughts influenced this study. Therefore, I attempted to be self-reflective and transparent as I wrote, even if, at times, it meant admitting my own short-comings as a researcher, a collaborator, and an infusion-model literacy methods instructor.

Summary

This chapter introduced the case study design I used to frame this research study. In addition to providing insight into my methodological choices, the chapter also introduced readers to the course instructors and the study participants, the Block III interns. Because of my past experience with the course and relationships with the

instructors, this chapter also defined the "neither and both" role I assumed as a researcher within the context of the course. I concluded the chapter by sharing the data collection techniques and analysis strategies I used to find and share meaning from the interns' course and student teaching experiences. The next chapter provides a closer look at the interns' attitudes and understandings at the beginning of the course.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTERN READINESS FOR CONSIDERATIONS OF THE INTERSECTIONS OF WHITENESS AND LITERACY

Teaching candidates bring prior knowledge and life experiences with them into the college classroom. Their knowledge base and life experiences shape the ways in which they approach and process the content presented in their courses. The objective of this chapter is to describe how the interns were developmentally situated to explore the intersections of Whiteness and literacy at the beginning of Block III. The first part of the chapter explores the interns' cultural positioning at the beginning of Block III. The second part of the chapter focuses on their understandings of literacy teaching. The final part of the chapter discusses how the interns' cultural positioning and understandings of literacy situated them to encounter intersections of Whiteness and literacy in Block III.

Positioning for Exploring Whiteness

The incoming beliefs and experiences of teacher education candidates influence their reception of multicultural content and ideas (Dee & Henkin, 2002; McCall, 1995; Sleeter, 2008; R. W. Smith, 2000). In order to understand the interns' readiness for exploring Whiteness in Block III, it is important to consider their cultural beliefs and backgrounds coming into the course. To access this information, I studied the interns' revised cultural autobiographies. The interns first wrote their cultural autobiographies in Block I. They responded to several open-ended questions about their experiences with culture. Because the questions were open-ended and varied by instructor, there was some discrepancy in the types of information the interns provided in their autobiographies, but largely they discussed race, language, religion, social class, geography, and their views about differences.

At the beginning of Block III, Diane and Susan required interns to access their original cultural autobiography from Block I, read it, and make changes. Twenty-one of the 24 interns in the study completed this assignment. They made these changes while concurrently reading the first part of a book chapter entitled *Preparing White Teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation: What Do They Need to Know and Be Able to Do?* (Richert, et al., 2009). Though the interns made changes under the influence of the reading, they submitted their assignment before discussing or following up on the assigned reading in any way, and very few of their responses included any revisions related to the content of reading.

The revised autobiographies provided a great deal of information related to the way the interns' cultural experiences situated them to consider issues of Whiteness in Block III. First, the revised autobiographies provided insight into the interns' cultural backgrounds, particularly their childhood homes and communities. Second, the autobiographies described the interns' more recent experiences with diversity. Third, the cultural autobiographies revealed three different orientations that framed the interns' thinking about cultural differences.

Cultural Backgrounds

In their cultural autobiographies many of the interns described their cultural backgrounds. They talked about such characteristics as race in their childhood community, their home language, their religious upbringing, and their socio-economic status. Table 8 depicts the information the interns shared about each variable. The numbers in the table represent only those 21 interns who completed the assignment. Because the assignment was open-ended, the response possibilities for the table include

yes, no, and not mentioned. In spite of its limitations, this table still reveals a significant pattern in the interns' responses: the interns were brought up in predominantly White, monolingual, Christian, and middle-class homes and communities.

Table 8

Characteristics of Childhood Communities

	White Community	English as Only Home Language	Christian/Catholic Upbringing	Middle/Upper Class
Yes	17	12	15	13
No	2	1	3	1
Not mentioned	2	8	3	7

Eighty-nine percent of the interns who described the racial composition of their community grew up in predominantly White communities. Some of them discussed the handful of African American, Hispanic, or Indian families in their communities, but they made it clear that these individuals comprised a very small minority. They described the few minority families in their communities as novelties whose race was especially apparent because they stood out against a backdrop of Whiteness. Intern 5 exhibited a prototypical response when he described his childhood experience:

> From what I remember, all of the children in my elementary school were white, except for one or two black students. All of the families in our church were white, except for one black family. While I do not remember any racist or segregationist behavior by my family or peers, the few minority students and families were seen as novelties.

The interns recognized that non-White individuals existed, but they had very little experience interacting with minority groups in their childhoods. Only two of the interns described living in racially diverse childhood communities.

In addition to being raised in predominantly White communities, the interns mainly came from middle-class, English-speaking homes. Ninety-three percent of the interns who described their socio-economic status came from middle-class or upper-middle-class homes. Only one intern described her family as poor. English was the only language spoken in 92% of the homes discussed by the interns and the only language necessary for the interns to navigate their childhood communities. Intern 24 explained: "I speak English as a first language and everybody around me always speaks English. I have never been in a situation where I was forced to speak another language or understand another language." Only one intern grew up in a household where her parents' first language was French, but even she grew up speaking English learning only bits and pieces of French from her parents and extended family. If the interns spoke about their attempts to learn a second language in school, they typically abandoned the language study because it did not serve a purpose in their lives. Only one intern reported developing any level of fluency with a second language.

The area of religion yielded another commonality for the interns. Most of them came from homes with some Judeo-Christian affiliation. These affiliations ranged from Protestant to Apostolic to Jehovah's Witness to Catholic. The degree to which the interns' families attended services and observed religious teachings varied greatly, but there was an overall familiarity with the doctrine and practices of Christianity. The three interns who did not affiliate with Christian beliefs did not participate in any form of organized religion.

The commonalities among the interns do not indicate that they all thought the same way or that they all had the same experiences growing up, but it does show that

their childhood experiences – for the most part – positioned them as White, middle-class, Christian-influenced, monolingual individuals who were preparing to work in diverse classrooms.

Recent Experiences with Diversity

The interns' responses about their backgrounds helped situate their histories as they entered the teaching program. However, by the time Block III commenced, the interns had taken two years of classes at an urban university. Consequently, they had new encounters with diversity that they described in their revised autobiographies.

For some interns, college classes and field experiences offered them a new glimpse of the world and its people. Intern 3 described the diversity of her college courses:

> I have been introduced to different races, sexualities, genders, cultures, etc. I have had classes with Muslim, Philippians, Mexicans, white, black, male, female. Therefore….I have been able to find out more about different backgrounds and get to know their culture better.

In addition to taking classes with a broader range of people, the interns' field experiences also exposed them to cultural differences. Intern 23 explained the way her field experience allowed her to experience cultural and racial diversity that was absent from her childhood school and community:

> Over the past year I have been immersed into different cultural situations. Growing up in a small town I didn't see different cultures or races. Through Block I and II, we have been in many different schools. Those schools have had a large mix of different cultures and races. I have gained a new perspective on these issues and have become a more diverse individual than the previous year.

Several interns echoed the relevance of this exposure to urban classrooms in shaping their perspectives on diversity.

For other interns, experiences with cultural and racial diversity extended beyond their classroom experiences to their neighborhoods, apartment communities, or jobs. Their descriptions of classroom experiences and, for some, their daily lives demonstrated a greater exposure to cultural and racial diversity during their college experiences than in their childhood years.

The contrast between their experiences in homogeneous communities and their more recent experiences with diversity prompted some of the interns to develop new ideas about the world and their place in it. In their original unrevised autobiographies, the interns discussed the adequacy of English-speaking in their daily interactions. For instance, Intern 11 wrote, "Everyone that I know speaks English," and Intern 24 stated, "Coming from a town with little racial diversity, I was never really concerned about being able to speak to those who [*sic*] English is not their first language." However, as the interns attended university courses in the city and worked in culturally and linguistically diverse classrooms, the interns frequently described the linguistic diversity they experienced in their daily lives since beginning at the university. As Intern 9 explained, "Now that I am older and living in a bigger city, it is not uncommon for me to walk down the street or be out somewhere and hear other people talking in Spanish or other languages. I have multiple interactions in a day with people who speak different languages and at times there are language barriers." In addition, a few even expressed concern that their monolingualism might pose as a limitation to their teaching. Intern 22 explained that "English, though spoken by many still has its boundaries with students and parents in the classroom." Intern 24 described her desire to learn new languages in order to be able "to communicate" and "to build a relationship" with her non-English-speaking

students. Through interactions in classrooms and around the city, the interns were becoming aware of linguistic diversity and beginning to recognize the limitations of their own monolingualism in teaching culturally and linguistically diverse learners.

While recent experiences with diversity allowed the interns to revise their thinking about monolingualism, their original ideas about their own cultural and racial identities remained largely intact. In their original autobiographies, several of the interns discussed their own sense of living without a race or of being cultureless. Intern 24 wrote, "I really don't feel that race is really evident in my life." Three of her peers also claimed that race was "not evident" in their lives, and two of them talked about not having a cultural background. Intern 3 explained, "I believe that since I did not have a cultural background, that it has made me very sheltered and has prevented me from being able to adapt to others easily." Although most interns maintained their original understandings of their culture and race, one intern – possibly under the influence of the assigned reading – revised his initial thinking. When Intern 22 first wrote his autobiography, he talked about feeling "blended in" with the crowd while people who were not White stood out. In his revised edition, he wrote:

> I have seen myself around much more than just white people. I worked in a force that was half African-American, some Hispanic, and a couple Indonesian. I have also been inside urban schools working in classrooms that looked the total opposite of mine growing up. I now no longer see myself "blending" into the white crowd, but standing out in a diverse crowd of people that I live my daily life with.

Intern 22's revisions show a shift in thinking. When he entered the teaching program, he automatically accepted Whiteness as the norm. A year later, he saw Whiteness as one racial identity among many.

In summary, the interns' college courses, field experiences, and even their living situations (in some instances) exposed them to greater diversity in recent years than in their childhood communities. In some cases, their recent experiences with diversity caused them to revise their thinking while in other instances their initial understandings remained largely unchanged.

Dealing with Differences

The interns did not all take up the same line of thinking as they discussed differences. However, they presented a variation of minor but important themes that were consistent across their autobiographies. As I coded and sorted the responses from their autobiographies, it became clear that their ideas represented three different orientations, or ways of thinking, about differences: a political-legal orientation, a Judeo-Christian orientation, and a future teacher orientation. The lines of thinking that emerged within these orientations depicted the way the interns saw and envisioned treating others who were racially, culturally, and linguistically different than themselves.

Political-legal orientation. In considering the interns' responses about differences, many of them spoke out of a political-legal stance that appeared to be grounded in democracy. The interns generated three observable patterns for using democratic language and ideals to talk about their understandings of differences. First, they grounded their view of others in the democratic ideal of equality. Secondly, they embraced a political, public way of talking about differences and diversity that promoted inclusivity. Finally, they distanced themselves from overt prejudice.

Equality. The interns frequently referred to principles of equality in talking about differences. These seemed to invoke the language and ideals of the The U.S. Declaration

of Independence (1776) which states that "all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" (paragraph 2). Some of the interns developed this idea by casting all people as equals. For instance, as Intern 14 stated, "I was taught that everyone is equal and I have followed that my whole life." Others who echoed the idea that all people are equal were more specific in naming "all races and ethnicities" (Intern 4) or "all men and women of all cultures, races, and languages" (Intern 5). A few of the interns delineated the importance of treating people equally. Intern 6 described this as feeling strongly about "equal rights for everyone," and Intern 21 vociferated, "Everyone in the world is a human being and everyone should be treated equally." The interns reiterated ideals set forth in the Declaration of Independence.

In still other instances, the interns developed the idea of equality by establishing a color-blind mentality. Six interns discussed their thinking that everyone should be seen as a person, not as their color. Intern 23 captured the main gist of this theme in saying, "I feel that the color of your skin does not matter; we are all the same, human beings." One of her colleagues, Intern 6, connected this idea to teaching: "When I am in a classroom, I see the children, not their color." Although all of the interns were invited to revise their cultural autobiographies under the influence of the assigned reading, only one intern made changes to her initial colorblind stance. While she originally agreed with her peers saying, "I do not see someone's skin color when I look at them," in her revision she problematized her original line of thinking:

> Although I do not believe a person's skin color should be a basis of judgment, I think it is also ignorant to believe that you do not see someone's color. After doing the readings, I realize that I want to embrace all backgrounds and ethnicities.

With the exception of Intern 11's revelatory revision, the interns constructed a depiction of equality as seeing and treating everyone as "the same."

Politically-correct language. The interns' political orientation toward differences was also actualized through the more common language they used to talk about differences. They were overtly positive about people's differences. They talked about the need to be "open" to others. They used words like "embrace" and "welcome" in their responses, and they expressed a desire "to learn" about different cultural groups. Their language was saturated with ideas about being nonjudgmental and accepting.

In some cases, the interns expressed inclusive ideas by employing the negative of an action. Rather than explaining what they were going to do, some of the interns explained what they would not do – how they would not judge others or make someone feel unwelcome. For example, Intern 4 stated, "I still believe that all people are different and no one should be looked down upon because of that."

At this point in their development, the interns promoted inclusive ideals through language that was globally inclusive using statements that tended to be broad rather than specific and presented an idealized vision of inclusivity based on anticipated actions rather than past personal experiences.

Racism, prejudice, and biases. A third landscape reflected in the interns' political-legal orientation toward differences emerged in the interns' understanding of racism, prejudice, and biases. Though only some of the interns discussed these ideas, those who did presented a surprisingly similar understanding of them. They used the words *racism, prejudice*, and *biases* rather generically and interchangeably. In general, the interns discussed racism, prejudice, and biases as very concrete negative attitudes

against certain groups of people. In addition, they distanced themselves from these ideas by situating them as realities from a different historical era rather than something alive and active in their social constructions today. Five of them did this by talking about their parents' prejudiced attitudes against African Americans. While they expressed lament over their parents' views, they excused their parents from their prejudices by claiming that their parents were raised in "different times." Generally speaking, the interns upheld the political-legal stance that racism, prejudices, and biases are no longer permissible. However, two interns did challenge this monolithic, politically-grounded view of racism by depicting biases and prejudices as something more subtle, nuanced, and personalized. Intern 24 established the position that "everybody has a little bit of racism and prejudice inside them," and Intern 21 wrote, "I need to be continually sensitive to cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic bias…We all carry these sensitivities as a product of our environment. As an educator, I must be sensitive to the cultural perspective of my students."

In summary, the interns' grounded their views of others in the democratic ideal of equality, presenting everyone as created equal and deserving to be treated the same in spite of their differences. In addition, they developed a generally inclusive stance toward differences that reflected little personal knowledge of dealing with differences. Lastly, they established a political-legal view of racism, prejudice, and biases as negative and passé.

Religious orientation. The interns' responses also indicated the influence of a religious orientation as they discussed their understandings of difference. In their autobiographies, nearly all of the interns described an adherence to – or at least a

familiarity with – general Judeo Christian values and teachings. This religious system seemed evident as they described interacting with others who are different. For example, the Golden Rule was a common mantra among intern responses. "Treat others the way you wish to be treated" (Intern 21) and similar variations were mentioned five times by interns. The interns also talked about being open, accepting others, and treating people with dignity, respect, and kindness. For example, Intern 7 explained, "We were raised as Christians, and so we were educated to treat everyone kindly and with respect."

Future teacher orientation. As the interns discussed cultural differences in the classroom, they clearly positioned themselves as future teachers. They staked their claim in the teaching profession and personalized the role of teacher. For example, Intern 4 said: "For myself I know that I still have a lot of learning to do with different races, ethnicities and cultures to help myself in the classroom and be the best person/teacher I can be." One of her peers referred to herself as "a future educator" and went on to talk about meeting her new students and learning about their home life and family structure. These comments typified the manner in which the interns positioned themselves as future educators in the teaching profession.

For the interns, one important component of their future teacher orientation was their recognition that they would be working with a diverse population of students. For the most part, the interns expressed a willingness to embrace that role even though they did not have a lot of experience in this area. Intern 11 explained, "I have grown to embrace other cultures and really see recognize [*sic*] the greatness of diversity within a classroom." Intern 3 said it in this way, "I believe that in the future when dealing with students that I will be okay with the different cultures and how to adapt to suit their

needs." And Intern 15 stated: "I am very willing to teach students of different races and cultures. I may not know a lot about other cultures, but I am always willing to listen and learn about other cultures and people."

On the whole, the interns took up this willingness to learn and grow in order to be open to and accommodating of cultural differences in the classroom. However, Intern 18 honestly assessed the challenges her own cultural upbringing might present in her work with culturally diverse learners :

> Even though I feel that I have an open mind and heart to all cultures, I am still unsure how I would react to teaching in a school with a culture completely different from my own. I would hope that I would be able to do so, but because I have such a strong upbringing of middle to high class whites I think that it might be difficult for me to adjust.

In a sense, her comment captured where many of the interns were at this juncture in their educational careers. They knew they would have the opportunity to teach in diverse classrooms. They wanted to be inclusive of other cultures and to be prepared to teach all students, but they had not yet been tested. Although they expressed hope, they had yet to learn whether they were capable of being effective teachers in culturally and linguistically diverse classroom.

The interns' cultural autobiographies provided valuable insight into their readiness to encounter critical multiculturalism, particularly Whiteness theory, in Block III. The interns came from predominantly White communities where English, Christianity, and middle-class values shaped their childhood experiences. However, their vision for diversity expanded when they entered college and saw many different races and ethnicities in the classrooms and sometimes the neighborhoods around them. The interns' recent experiences with racial and cultural diversity provided opportunities for

them to begin to confront and revise some of their beliefs. The interns also talked about their feelings towards differences which revealed the influence of political-legal, Judeo-Christian, and future teacher orientations on their thinking. In the following discussion, I explore how these aspects of the interns' backgrounds situated them for considering critical multiculturalism – particularly Whiteness – in Block III.

Discussion of Intern Positioning for Exploring Whiteness

The information the interns provided in their revised cultural autobiographies suggests three significant discussion points regarding the ways in which they were positioned to encounter critical multiculturalism, including Whiteness, during Block III. First, at this point in their educational journeys, the interns' identified with some – but not all – of the attitudes and beliefs typical of White preservice teachers. Second, the interns' recent experiences with diversity, coupled with their college coursework, provided them with a context for revising their thinking but it did not yet necessitate an examination of Whiteness. Lastly, the interns' orientations for framing differences provided insight into their experiences with group membership in society and the related ideologies that shaped their thinking.

Typical Preservice Teacher Beliefs

When the interns described their cultural upbringings in the assignment, they nearly all talked about growing up in predominantly White, monolingual communities. It is not surprising then that they demonstrated some of the problematic attitudes toward diversity that are typical of White preservice teachers. In an extensive review of literature, Sleeter (2008) highlighted four problematic characteristics in White preservice teachers' thinking. First, White preservice teachers tend to be "dysconscious" of the

pervasive and institutional nature of racism. Second, they tend to have a deficit framework for viewing students of color. Third, they generally have little contact with communities of color and frequently hide behind a guise of colorblindedness in order to avoid discussing race and racism. Lastly, White preservice teachers lack awareness of themselves as cultural beings thus failing to account for their own Whiteness and its influence on their view of others and their teaching of diverse learners. The interns' clearly demonstrated three of these four beliefs. On the whole, they were "dysconscious" of the systematic nature of racism, claimed colorblindedness, and lacked awareness of themselves as cultural beings. However, they did not display deficit thinking about the learning capabilities of students of color.

There are several possible explanations for this deviation. One possibility is that interns did have deficit perspectives on student learning that were not revealed in the data. The cultural autobiographies were not intended to gauge the interns' expectations of learning for students of color. Though they talked positively about student learning, their attitudes and beliefs in this area were not specifically tested. Furthermore, they were writing for a particular audience – their education instructors – so there was incentive to frame their thinking about students of color in a positive light.

Another possibility in explaining a lack of deficit thinking in interns' writings is that incoming teachers have may evolved in their thinking past deficit thinking. In a meta-analysis of incoming preservice teachers' views of cultural diversity, Castro (2010) found that teaching candidates in the millennial generation are more socially aware than their preceding counterparts. Perhaps the interns simply entered the university with a more recent perspective on student learning than Sleeter's findings suggested.

A third possibility – the most compelling explanation in relation to the overall findings from this data set – is that the interns entered the teacher education program with a deficit framework but modified their thinking in light of the content from their courses and their recent experiences with diversity.

The cultural autobiography data indicated that the interns' recent experiences with diversity gave them opportunities to revise their thinking and provided a context in which to consider alternate realities. Their experiences gave them opportunities to be in proximity with "others" in ways they were never able to do before entering the university. Field experiences can help preservice teachers become more aware of the differences between themselves and their students' backgrounds and experiences and can cause them to experience feelings associated with White guilt (Groff & Peters, 2012), but they must be paired with critical reflection in order to have a positive influence on the attitudes and beliefs of preservice teachers (Sleeter, 2001). Fortunately, the interns participated in multicultural coursework in tandem with their field placements. As a result of these experiences, the began to see that some of the beliefs they had formed through participation in their childhood communities – such as the adequacy of English-only – did not transfer to urban classrooms.

Although the interns' experiences with diversity opened their eyes to differences and helped them reframe some of their own thinking, it did not cause them to recognize the role of Whiteness in education. This is significant for two reasons. First, it indicates that exposure to sociocultural theory and experiences with diversity are an important starting point, but they are not enough to help the interns see Whiteness at work in the classrooms they visit or the world around them. Groff and Peters (2012) explain that

cross-cultural contact is a prerequisite for seeing Whiteness, but more than exposure is necessary to promote an awareness of White privilege and power. The interns' recent experiences added to their experiential reservoirs – their general set of life experiences. Therefore, their position for encountering Whiteness has been altered to some degree. They could now draw from this new set of experiences – not just their White, middle-class upbringings – to consider Whiteness.

Orientations and Ideologies

The interns' comments about differences in their cultural autobiographies revealed three orientations for looking at differences that influenced their thinking: a political-legal orientation, a Judeo-Christian orientation, and a future teacher orientation. The interns spoke from these orientiations because, collectively-speaking, they belonged to the social groups represented by these orientations. This is not to say that their membership was unanimous, intentional, or limited to these three groups, but membership in these groups played into the interns' identities and influenced their thinking about differences in education and society.

When thinking about group membership, it is important to recognize that group membership is inherently tied to ideology. As Gee (2008) explains, we develop certain "cultural models" through our participation in different social groups, which he refers to as Discourse communities. Cultural models are beliefs or ideas about what is "normal." We all internalize a system of ideas about the way the world is supposed to work. We generate this tacit framework of thought through our participation in society, and we, in turn, use this framework of thought in society to give order and meaning to the social and political world in which we live (Hall as cited in Darder, 1995). The ideologies the

interns adopted by virtue of their group membership positioned them to not recognize inequity in society and not to see their own privilege.

Several dominant and unexamined ideologies emerged from their democratic membership. First, at this point in the course, the interns' ascribed to a view of equality that did not push them to examine inequities in society. General statements such as "we are all equal" and "everyone should be treated equally" keeps one from having to examine the systemic and structural inequities that endure in spite of everyone being "human" and deserving just and equitable opportunities. Second, the interns adopted a color-blind view of teaching and society, but a color-blind approach to teaching is also problematic. According to Atwater (2008), color-blindness acts as a form of escapism whereby a teacher does not have to deal with the hard realities of inequities or her own privilege. And Valli (1995) explained, "Not seeing color blinds White teacher interns to their own dominating culture and behaviors" (p. 126). A third unexamined ideology the interns described was their belief that prejudice occurred in past generations, largely rejecting any need for critical reflection about current race relations or personal prejudices or biases. Case and Hemmings (2005) found that White female preservice teachers used this historic view of racism to distance themselves from considering their own race and racism in a teacher education course, and this ideology seemed to work in much the same way for some of the Block III interns.

The interns' religious membership helped them generate an image of how to treat others, while simultaneously preventing them from considering that others might have different cultural models regarding how they would like to be treated. Over and over the interns discussed the necessity of following the Golden Rule and treating others the way

they themselves wished to be treated. However, the interns' ideas about how they would like to be treated with kindness and respect came from their realities growing up in White, middle-class, English-speaking, predominantly Christian families. The interns did not yet recognize how kindness and respect might be culturally defined and, therefore, worthy of reconsideration from different cultural perspectives as well.

Whereas the interns' democratic and religious memberships were established early in life, their membership in the teaching profession was a new – and incomplete – venture. As Rosaen and Florio-Ruane (2008) explain, teachers have a professional identity that deeply penetrates their lives and relationships. The interns were becoming a part of a community of practice, and though they already saw themselves as part of this community, they consistently reiterated their status as "future" teachers who were still learning and acquiring the discourse of teaching. One of the strongest ideological beliefs the interns expressed from their future teacher orientation was the commitment to embrace differences and be willing to learn and grow in order to be open to and accommodating of cultural differences in the classroom. While this commitment to accepting and accommodating cultural differences is desirable, this stance also situates teachers as the gatekeepers, putting them in the position to decide which differences will be accepted and accommodated. Furthermore, it allows teachers to focus on the cultural characteristics of others without examining their own cultural impact in the classroom. In a study on preparing preservice teachers for work in culturally and racially diverse urban classrooms, Milner (2006) found that it was important for preservice teachers to think deeply about themselves as racial, gendered, and cultured individuals. An ideology that

places the focus on others' differences does not position the interns well for this type of self-exploration.

It was also notable that the interns' professional commitments did cause some tensions across their beliefs. Some interns seemed unaware of the contradictions in their expressed beliefs. For example, some interns verbalized their need to "see" their students and know their cultural backgrounds, but they did not yet recognize how this commitment might conflict with their belief that they should be colorblind. Others seemed more aware of the tension as they considered the unexpected hardships they might encounter when working with students from different linguistic, cultural, and racial backgrounds. This points to the reality that membership in different discourse communities can cause tension (Gee, 2008). The ideologies from one group can rub against those from another. In considering the interns' positioning at the beginning of Block III, it is apparent that an examination of Whiteness would conflict with many of their previously held ideologies.

Summary

The interns were typical teacher education candidates. As such, they had many – but not all – of the characteristic beliefs and attitudes of preservice White teachers at the beginning of Block III. However, in addition to their cultural upbringings, they had also been impacted by recent experiences with diversity and two semesters of education courses focused on urban teaching. For this reason, they were uniquely positioned to encounter Whiteness theory in relation to the urban classrooms they had experienced and the sociocultural theory to which they had been exposed. Yet at this juncture, the interns were still operating from an ideological foundation grounded in democratic thought,

Judeo-Christian values, and notions of teaching that would make it difficult for them to do the hard work of unpacking their Whiteness and privilege and considering their own cultural impact in the classroom. The interns' cultural positioning contributed greatly to their preparedness to encounter critical multiculturalism in their literacy course, but their understandings of literacy also situated them in particular ways for this encounter. The second part of this chapter considers how the interns are situated by their understandings of literacy at the beginning of Block III.

Understandings of Literacy

In preparation for the first day of class, Diane and Susan asked the interns to type and bring to class two or three paragraphs on their "personal BIG understandings of literacy teaching and learning." Twenty-two of the interns completed the assignment, and their responses provided important insight into the interns' general understandings of literacy at the beginning of the course. While there was no distinct structure to the students' responses, their responses generally addressed the nature and purposes of literacy and their understandings of literacy teaching and learning. I organized the findings to reflect these two categories.

The Nature and Purposes of Literacy

As the interns discussed what it meant to teach literacy, they developed a picture of what constitutes literacy. In this section, I first present their common definition of literacy. Following this definition, there are two sections that describe ways in which the interns expanded this foundational understanding. The first section addresses the role of comprehension in literacy and the second consists of individual responses that extended the original definition. Following the expanded definitions, I lay out the purposes of

literacy that the interns described. Finally, I discuss critical literacy as a notably missing component of their responses.

Literacy as reading and writing text. The interns' dominant understanding of literacy was that it involves reading and writing text. The few interns who explicitly attempted to define literacy in their responses captured this notion. For example, Intern 3 stated: "Literacy is the process of reading and written [*sic*] language." It was more common for interns to refer to reading and writing as the assumed outcomes of literacy teaching. For instance, "All children can learn to read and write, but it is up to us as teachers to give them opportunities to do this" (Intern 12), and "I feel that by teaching the students in the appropriate reading levels, it allows the students to be successful throughout their journey in learning to read and write" (Intern16). These responses illustrate a common understanding among interns of literacy as reading and writing.

Comprehension. When the interns referred to literacy as the act of reading and writing, they did not simply mean reading words off a page or encoding words onto a page. They were very concerned that reading and writing focus on comprehension. Given the open-ended nature of the question, it was striking that ten of the 22 interns referred to the importance of comprehension. There was not one single term they used to discuss the centrality of comprehension in literacy, but they employed variations of comprehend/comprehension, gain/construct/convey meaning, and understand/understanding to develop this notion. For example, Intern 11 emphasized: "First and foremost, they need to understand what they are reading." Intern 22 explained that reading involves looking for meaning: "Literacy involves much more than just reading books of all shapes, sizes, and genres, it also involves looking at the meaning

behind each passage and what it can bring to the reader." Intern 6 said: "I think that literacy is more than just being able to read something but also to comprehend what you have read, and to be able to use it in life." In these statements and others, the interns utilized a variety of terms to highlight the key role of comprehension in their understanding of literacy.

Individual expansions. While the act of reading and writing for meaning comprised a foundational understanding of literacy among interns, four interns extended these ideas. Two of the interns integrated ideas from the area of New Literacies (New London Group, 1996) into their understandings of literacy. Rather than defining literacy solely as the act of reading and writing of text, they described literacy as something involving multiple modalities. According to Intern 14, "To be literate, you not only have to construct meaning from text, but also from pictures, audio, video, etc." Intern 20 described how literacy is taught and learned through visual art, music, culture, and media. These two interns considered literacy as a broader construct than the mere ability to read and write text.

Interns 5 and 9 also extended literacy beyond reading and writing. Leaning heavily on Gee's (1996) idea of Discourse, Intern 5 explained, "In harmony with Gee's definition, literacy involves a particular orientation to seeing the world and communicating about it." He went on to quote Gee's definition of Discourse as "a 'socially recognized way of using language, as well as way of thinking, believing, feeling, valuing, acting/doing and interacting in relation to people and things' (p. 3)." This understanding of literacy situates reading and writing as a small part of a much larger way of living and being in the world. Grounded in this understanding is the notion

that literacy is inherently social and is used to navigate entry into the various social and cultural groups one encounters in life. The intern who proffered this definition had taken extra courses in literacy and language education for a special endorsement he was pursuing, so it was not terribly surprising that he had been exposed to a more sophisticated understanding of literacy than his peers. However, Intern 9 reached a surprisingly similar understanding of literacy without the academic complexity:

> I don't think that anyone ever stops learning, nor do I believe that we always look at everything from one perspective. I think that when we come to understand things in a new way that we are still learning, still growing, which to me is literacy.

These four interns offered understandings of literacy as including and extending beyond the simple act of reading and writing text.

The purposes of literacy. Beyond the general understanding of literacy as reading and writing for meaning, a few minor themes also emerged regarding the purposes of literacy. One of these ideas mentioned by seven of the interns was that literacy should be integrated "across the curriculum" or in "other subjects" as well. As the interns explored this concept, they typically spoke about literacy as a foundation for learning about other subjects. Intern 22's response typified this type of thinking:

> Teaching literacy enables children to branch out into many other subjects that they learn and utilize it the best way they can to understand the world around them. It can be used to learn about science, math, writing, or many other subjects to be taught.

As Intern 22's comment suggests, the interns saw a need for children to utilize literacy skills in order to gain content area knowledge.

Going beyond literacy in school contexts, a few of the interns presented an understanding of literacy as something useful in the world or in students' lives outside of

the classroom. Many of the interns linked academic literacy with the everyday lives and experiences of their students. The following quotation from Intern 6 captured what seemed to be an assumed understanding by most of the interns that literacy is useful in life outside of school:

> Not only do you need it for every aspect of your life, whether it is educational purposes or day to day life. I think that literacy is more than just being able to read something but also to comprehend what you have read, and to be able to use it in life.

The interns frequently talked about making literacy learning relevant to students' lives and interests outside of school.

Critical literacy. Because of the interns' exposure to critical literacy concepts in their previous methods courses, I had expected to see the fundamental principles of critical literacy pedagogy in their responses. However, ideas from critical literacy were nearly invisible in their responses. Only one intern mentioned the need to interrogate multiple perspectives (Intern 20) and two interns hinted at connections between literacy and power in society (Intern 7 and Intern 22). Intern 7 stated: "Literacy opens up exponentially more opportunities to those who can reach it; there is a significant advantage to being literate." Intern 22 explained that "literacy can be for our own use to excel in the world….what we learn from literacy that shapes who we become and the lives that we will lead in the future." Yet even these statements remained fairly cursory and did not attempt to tease out the relationship between literacy and power in society, the possibilities for student agency and social action through literacy learning, or the need for literacy to expose and work to rectify social injustice. While the interns had been exposed to critical literacy pedagogy that promoted disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple perspectives, focusing on socio political issues, and taking action

and promoting social justice (Lewison, Flint, & Van Sluys, 2002) they had not yet assimilated these ideas into their own understandings of literacy.

In summary, the interns presented a fairly unified understanding of literacy as the act of reading and writing printed text with comprehension. However, the four voices that extended this general understanding of literacy illustrate that the interns are not all in the same place on their journey of understanding and defining literacy. As the minor themes indicate, the interns saw literacy as beneficial for students because of its potential to help them develop knowledge in other subject areas, serve as a useful tool in life outside of school, and open opportunities for success in the world. In spite of their exposure to critical literacy theory, the interns did not take up its principles in their own definitions of literacy. In the next section, these interns' definitions of the nature and purpose of literacy are discussed in relation to their emerging understandings of literacy teaching and learning.

Understandings of Literacy Teaching and Learning

The interns' writings exuded a fresh and positive perspective on literacy teaching and learning. Their words rang with a sincere desire to help children. They took upon themselves a responsibility for creating readers and writers in their classrooms, and they conveyed a sense of confidence in their abilities to meet this challenge. Their voices confidently and resolutely defined four major themes in this section: 1) all children can learn, 2) teachers need to vary their methods of literacy instruction, 3) literacy instruction should be relevant to students' lives, and 4) the teacher should facilitate student learning. Each of these themes is described in greater depth.

All children can learn. The interns shared a common belief that all students are capable of learning. They demonstrated this by using phrases such as "all students have the potential to develop and grow" (Intern 20), "every student has the ability to learn literacy" (Intern 3), "all children can learn to read and write" (Intern 12), "each and every child is capable of gaining literacy" (Intern 21), and "my understanding of literacy teaching is to make every student a more successful and proficient readers and writers [sic]" (Intern 23). Interns further clarified this position by explaining that children learn differently. Snippets such as "literacy can be achieved in as many ways as there are learners" (Intern 7); "not all students are going to learn the same way" (Intern 9); and "each student uses their own strategies to determine how to read" (Intern 15) demonstrate how the interns considered their students to be individuals with different learning styles. Not only do the interns believe that can all children learn, but they also believe that teachers should use a variety of methods to help children learn.

Literacy teaching involves a variety of methods. The interns presented a flexible view of literacy teaching. They envisioned literacy instruction relying on a variety of methods intentionally employed to meet students' individual needs. According to Intern 24, literacy "should be taught using a combination of methods." Intern 7 explained that "there is no singularly successful method of literacy teaching." And Intern 15 captured the common understanding best with her statement: "Teaching literacy involves using different methods. These different methods can be based upon each student."

Many of the interns' individually attempted to define the different methods they discussed. As they described the "methods," it quickly became apparent that "methods"

was a rather vague term that they were using to describe different aspects of literacy teaching. In order to discuss the interns' "methods," I attempt to limit the ambiguity of the term by categorizing their responses as either structures of literacy instruction or strategies for instruction. By structures, I am referring to the formations or tools that help the interns organize instruction and bring literacy into the classroom. When I speak of strategies, I mean those things the interns actively plan to ***do*** with students.

Structures. The interns identified several structures that they envisioned implementing in their classrooms. The interns imagined these structures supporting their literacy instruction and creating opportunities for children to read and write. Intern 15 identified several different structures in her response:

> We then allow students to have *independent reading time, one on one reading time,* and *small group reading time for practice* [italics added]. Using different methods of reading time will allow for students to read in ways that they feel comfortable. It also allows for them to have different opportunities to practice their reading.

In addition to those structures listed by Intern 15, the other structures mentioned throughout the responses include: whole group instruction, read alouds, literacy stations, writing prompts, independent reading, and small group instruction (Intern 18); small group centers based on reading levels (Intern 16); classroom library, running records, guided reading, reading and writing conferences (Intern 2); and reading and writing workshop (Intern 21). Although the list of structures generated from the 22 responses is not especially long or exhaustive, it does illustrate the interns' familiarity with a variety of structures that support reading and writing development.

Strategies. The interns named multiple strategies for literacy teaching. The vast majority of interns (19/22) mentioned at least one strategy in their responses. Although

the interns regarded literacy as both reading and writing, the strategies they mentioned consistently addressed reading instruction in greater depth and with greater frequency than writing instruction. Intern 15's response names some common strategies, but it also demonstrates the way the interns' strategies focused on reading [italics added]:

> When providing these opportunities to read *children also need to be reading different types of text*. These different types of text can be newspapers, magazines, articles, different genres, etc….As a teacher we must also *assess children's reading*. When assessing children's reading we can *record miscues and mistakes, analyze strategies they are using to read, and decided which types of books are at their reading level*….When children are reading they need to be responding to their reading and they should *reflect on their reading progress through written activities and orally*.

In a few sentences, this intern identified many different strategies for reading instruction. Table 9 lists a rather large composite list of strategies for teaching reading identified by the interns collectively.

This table shows that the interns have an arsenal of reading strategies – many of which are concerned with making reading instruction relevant to individual students. However, this table also shows an interesting pattern worth noting: the interns desire to individualize literacy instruction by drawing from children's life worlds and cultural backgrounds, but they do not name any strategies that would help them access this information. The top four strategies named and some of the others later in the table such as "use familiar reading material" and "build on previous knowledge" reflect the interns' desire to relate reading to students' lives, interests, and abilities. A few of the strategies discussed possibilities for assessing students' abilities, but none of them discussed gathering information about students' lives, worlds and cultural backgrounds. At this point, many of their strategies for personalizing literacy instruction assume access to a body of knowledge that they have not yet acquired. The interns believed that literacy

teaching should be relevant to students' lives, not just as a teaching strategy but as a broader way of setting up their classrooms for literacy teaching and learning.

Table 9

Strategies for Reading Instruction

Strategy for Reading Instruction	Intern(s)	Total Interns Listing Strategy
Make reading relevant to world around them or their everyday lives	8, 9, 11, 20, 21, 24	6
Use students' interests	1, 2, 17, 21, 23	5
Assess students' reading abilities	1, 2, 15, 18	4
Provide books at students' reading levels	2, 8, 15, 16	4
Incorporate different types and/or genres of texts	14, 15, 18, 20	4
Read aloud to students	6, 13, 18	3
Teach subskills (or in small steps)	10, 23	2
Ask open-ended questions to gauge comprehension	1	1
Look at the meaning of each passage	22	1
Gain the child's trust and follow the lead of the child	1	1
Use familiar reading material	1	1
Build on previous knowledge	23	1
Record miscues and analyze strategies children are using	15	1
Encourage children to use picture cues and use new words	6	1
Model positive reading habits and share a love for reading	18	1
Reflect on reading progress orally and in writing	15	1
Demonstrate strategies for students	15	1
Integrate new literacies	14	1
Encourage students to seek multiple perspectives	20	1
Give time to examine and read different texts	12	1

Literacy should be relevant to students' lives. The interns' desire to connect literacy instruction with student's lives comprised a major theme in the interns' overall understandings of literacy teaching. Intern 23 explained, "I want to have a student driven classroom that corresponds to their interests and ideas. I want to create an environment that enhances their learning and builds on their previous knowledge." Throughout their responses, most of the interns demonstrated a desire to connect student learning with the students' lives.

While most of the interns simply expressed the desire to connect what happens inside the classroom to students' lives outside the classroom, a few of them saw value in pulling the child's life experiences into the classroom – a subtle but noticeable difference. Intern 23 noted, "We have to pull the students [*sic*] environment into the classroom." Intern 7 captured it in this way:

> Teaching literacy is a complex and significant task that is accomplished by many individuals and resources, not just teachers. Literacy learning begins at home, thus the home culture of every literacy learner is an asset to be valued highly.

These quotations express a deep respect for children's lives as a resource in literacy teaching. They extend beyond the idea of using students' interests and helping students see connections to actually drawing on their environments and experiences as resources for literacy learning. Only a few interns expressed this deeper connection between literacy and students' lives, but these quotations do illustrate the variation in the single theme of making literacy teaching relevant to interns' lives. Integrating children's culture into instruction relies on the teacher. The interns had distinct thoughts about the teacher's role in literacy instruction.

The teacher's role. The interns generated a fairly unified picture of the literacy teacher as a facilitator of learning – someone responsible for orchestrating student learning. Eighteen of them addressed the role of the literacy teacher in their responses, and of those respondents sixteen interns depicted a literacy teacher as a facilitator of literacy learning. Intern 3 stated: "As a teacher I need to provide students with opportunities to practice, build confidence, and utilize these skills." This typifies the way the teacher role was presented throughout nearly all of the responses. The interns described the literacy teacher as someone who develops learning experiences around the needs of her students. She creates learning opportunities that "engage" students (Intern 24) and "envelop learners in an environment of opportunities" (Intern 7). The literacy teacher is a facilitator who utilizes structures and strategies to create opportunities for students to develop literacy skills.

Only two of the interns resisted the image of teacher as facilitator. They struggled with the idea that teachers co-construct knowledge with students rather than transmit it to them. Intern 10 aligned with a transmission model in his belief that the teacher needs to lead students in "small steps." Intern 12 wrestled with the tension between the transmission and co-construction models. She wrote about teachers needing to give children opportunities to read and write – which is in accord with the facilitator image generated by her peers – but later added, "As a teacher, we hold the valuable knowledge that need [*sic*] to be given to our young children that will lay down a solid foundation to increase their literacy for a lifetime." On the one hand, the teacher creates opportunities for students to construct knowledge by reading and writing, but on the other, the teacher holds esteemed knowledge to impart. These dissonant voices remind

us that though most of the interns assimilated the sociocultural principle of teacher as facilitator others had a more difficult time abandoning the image of teacher as transmitter of knowledge.

In considering the interns' overall understandings of literacy teaching and learning, we see that they drew first from the foundational beliefs that all children can learn and that literacy teaching should be varied. The interns presented a number of structures and strategies that they might use to help students develop literacy skills and many interns delineated the connections between literacy teaching and their students' lives. They also exhibited a fairly unified vision of the role of the literacy teacher as a facilitator who utilizes structures and strategies to create opportunities for children to develop literacy skills. These findings comprised an important part of the interns' big understandings of literacy.

In summary, the interns' big understandings of literacy teaching and learning yielded several significant findings. First, for nearly all of the interns, literacy was understood as the act of reading and writing printed text with comprehension. They recognized that literacy had purposes in the world but critical literacy pedagogy remained largely absent from their thinking about literacy. Second, they expressed the belief that all children can learn and explored the teacher's role in the equation finding that literacy instruction should be varied, relevant to students' lives, and orchestrated by a teacher who facilitates learning experiences. These beliefs help us understand the interns' thinking about literacy at the beginning of Block III. The following discussion delves into the relevance of these findings.

Discussion of Interns' Understandings of Literacy

The interns' incoming understandings of literacy positioned them in particular ways for encountering intersections between Whiteness and literacy in Block III. This discussion focuses on three ways in which the interns' understandings of literacy situated them to encounter a culturally responsive focus on literacy in Block III.

Accessibility of Sociocultural Theory to Interns

The interns' understandings of literacy incorporated aspects of sociocultural theory. At the university, literacy courses exposed interns to sociocultural theories of learning (Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978; Woolfolk, 2007), so it was not surprising to see many components of sociocultural theory in their responses.

Learning is social. The interns' understandings of literacy clearly illustrated a belief in the *social nature of learning*. They recognized the importance of collaborative structures in their literacy instruction and saw literacy as a skill developed within communal spaces – in classrooms, in families, and in neighborhood communities.

Teaching is assisting. The interns nearly unanimously adopted a view of *teaching as assisting*. They described the literacy teacher as someone who facilitates learning experiences for students and helps them construct knowledge.

Knowledge as cultural content and competent participation. The interns demonstrated an emerging sense of *knowledge as cultural content and competent participation*. They recognized that children's social experiences shape the understandings and knowledge that they bring with them into the classroom. They expressed the desire to make literacy relevant to students by connecting it to their lives and interests. However, they indicated only vague awareness of knowledge and

participation in Discourse communities (Gee, 1996) as culturally defined. They recognized that children's thoughts and ideas were shaped by cultural forces and their social experiences, but they did not necessarily see the construction of new knowledge as a cultural undertaking.

Performance is situative. The interns envisioned using many strategies and structures to support student learning and anticipated using these to help students reach their potential level of development. Although the interns recognized that students would use literacy in different social settings (i.e., home and school), they did not yet consider how the students' changing contexts would influence their abilities to perform.

The interns automatically drew from sociocultural theories of learning as they presented their understandings of literacy. *Learning is social* and *teaching is assisting* were the two strongest elements they described, but they also indicated an emerging awareness of *knowledge as cultural content and competent participation* and *performance as situative*. Overall, sociocultural theory proved to be a highly accessible and useful theory for the interns as they constructed their philosophies of literacy teaching.

Definitions of Literacy

Individuals' background experiences affect their ability to be effective culturally responsive teachers (Sleeter, 2008; R. W. Smith, 2000), but their educational beliefs also contribute to their readiness for culturally responsive instruction. The interns' definitions of literacy impacted their positionality for exploring literacy as a cultural construct. For example, the intern who recognized that literacy involves Discourses (Gee, 1996) was conceptually positioned to think about the cultural forces at play in

literacy learning and instruction whereas those who described literacy as strictly reading and writing were less prepared to see connections between literacy and culture because their definition situated literacy as a technical skill. However, most interns described a more nuanced understanding of literacy as reading and writing with comprehension. This understanding situated them somewhere in the middle. Literacy is not steeped in culture like it was for the intern who discussed Discourses, but neither is it isolated as a technical skill independent of the reader and the writer. The understanding of literacy as reading and writing with meaning leaves space for considerations of culture in text construction and interpretation. Therefore, at the beginning of Block III, the interns' understandings of literacy were not steeped in the cultural, but they were open to consideration of its influences.

Lacking a Critical Lens

One idea that was presented in their Block I and II courses but largely absent from their understandings of literacy was that of critical literacy. The interns did not envision literacy as a pathway for reinvention. Only two interns discussed any sort of connection between literacy and power in society, and even those discussions were fairly cursory. As part of their previous courses, the interns were challenged to use trade books to interrupt dominant ideologies and become socially active in working toward more equitable conditions in society. However, in spite of their exposure to critical literacy principles, the interns did not adopt these principles as their own philosophical understandings of literacy or objectives for literacy teaching.

These findings are consistent with the research suggesting that preservice teachers struggle to adopt critical stance from their early university courses. In a study of

preservice teachers from critical-pedagogy-based teacher education program, Huerta, Scott, and Horton (as cited in Huerta-Charles, 2007) found that preservice teachers still felt lost after taking several classes based on the foundational privileges of critical pedagogy. Huerta-Charles (2007) explained, "After taking several critical pedagogy classes, these students didn't develop enough insight to think critically and challenge their misconceptions or wrong assumptions" (p. 252). Huerta-Charles' work shows us that it is difficult for preservice teachers to adopt a critical stance based on exposure to critical pedagogy ideals in college courses.

Developing critical stance is difficult, but translating that to literacy instruction provides an additional set of challenges. Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) demonstrated that it takes time, support, and resources for even experienced teachers to make changes in favor of critical literacy in their classrooms. The researchers found that a 29-year veteran teacher committed to and supported in using critical literacy practices demonstrated notable progress in the disrupting the commonplace, but she showed much less growth in interrogating multiple perspectives, examining sociopolitical issues, and taking social action. The interns are novice teachers at the beginning of their teaching journey. They are focused on learning strategies and structures that will help them actualize literacy instruction in the classroom, but they have dismissed the critical pedagogy that they learned alongside those practices. Critical theory is not easily accessible to them and their primary concern is figuring out how to teach reading. They do not appear developmentally ready to explore using literacy instruction to combat social injustice.

The interns' understandings of literacy provide many insights into their development and their preparation for encountering principles of critical multiculturalism in their literacy methods course. To begin with, the interns' understandings of literacy have clearly been shaped by their college courses. For the most part, they embraced sociocultural approaches to literacy instruction and they resonated with comprehension as an overarching goal of literacy; however, their responses remind us that they held a range of views about literacy with some more being sophisticated than others. Even given the range of understandings generated, the interns were not developmentally able to demonstrate a familiarity with or commitment to using the critical literacy practices they learned about in their courses. The next section explores how interns' current positioning at the beginning of Block III as cultural beings and teachers of literacy situates them for explorations of Whiteness and literacy.

Intersections of Whiteness and Literacy

Juxtaposing the findings from the interns' cultural autobiographies and their understandings of literacy reveals three distinct challenges facing the interns at the beginning of Block III. First, the interns' thinking demonstrated tensions between their commitment to teach using sociocultural theory and their actual preparedness for teaching literacy in classrooms with culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse learners. Second, the interns were not yet positioned to recognize the impact of their own culture in the literacy classroom. Third, the interns were preparing to encounter a critical approach to literacy instruction but they did not yet possess a critical lens. The following discussion explores the ways these tensions situated the interns for experiencing a literacy methods course infused with critical multiculturalism, particularly Whiteness.

The interns' cultural autobiographies and understandings of literacy both revealed their desire to use a sociocultural approach to literacy instruction. However, at this point in their development, the interns lacked cultural competence and appeared unfamiliar with strategies aimed at acquiring information about their students' cultural backgrounds. They frequently mentioned their need to know more about children's cultural backgrounds in their autobiographies. Although they expressed a willingness to learn, they clearly did not yet feel culturally competent. In addition, the majority of interns believed that reading should be "relevant" to their students' lives and that students' interests should guide reading selection, but none of the interns appeared familiar with instructional strategies that would help them access information about students' lives to accomplish these objectives. They did not yet have a vision for acquiring such information or using it to guide literacy instruction. Thus, the interns were theoretically grounded in the sociocultural principles that knowledge is cultural and learning is social (Vygotsky, 1978), but they still needed access to a body of knowledge and skills that they did not yet possess in order to in order to actualize these principles.

Another challenge facing the interns as they prepared to encounter literacy and Whiteness in Block III was their own sense of culturelessness. Their recent experiences with diversity positioned them to "see" others. They realized that urban classrooms were more culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse than the childhood classrooms in which they were taught. While this exposure to diversity caused them to begin thinking about what it would mean to teach children from diverse cultural, racial, and linguistic backgrounds, it did not incite them – in most cases – to turn their eyes upon themselves as cultural beings. Their sense of being cultureless, therefore, did not situate them to

think about how their own cultural backgrounds would influence interactions and learning in the classroom. Consequently, the interns were not positioned to consider how their cultural backgrounds influenced their or their students' identities, power, or agency (Lewis, Enciso, and Moje, 2007). They were not positioned to question the cultural basis of their behavioral expectations of their students nor to see the influence of Whiteness in the literacy curriculum or the teaching practices they would use with their students.

In order to see the hidden influence of their culture in the classroom, preservice teachers must be able to critically reflect on the way their culture shapes their participation in the classroom and their interactions with their students. Milner (2006) describes this critical reflection as a two-part process. First, preservice teachers must personally reflect on themselves as racialized, gendered, and cultured beings. Second, they must engage in *relational reflection,* meaning that they must consider themselves and their own experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and backgrounds *in conjunction with, comparison with,* and *contrast to* their students' and their students' communities. As Milner explained, "It was absolutely necessary that preservice teachers gained new, perhaps more relevant, insights about their own racial and cultural heritage; yet, it was equally necessary that they understood themselves in relation to others (or their students whom they would teach)" (p. 362). The interns in this study were not yet positioned for this type of critical reflection.

The final significant challenge facing the interns was their undeveloped critical stance. The interns saw children's cultural backgrounds as resources to use, but not as pieces of a larger story about power relations and equality. By nature, when critical multiculturalism – including a consideration of Whiteness – intersects with literacy, it

brings an approach to literacy teaching and learning that is fundamentally critical in nature. Culturally responsive literacy instruction grounded in critical multiculturalism cannot be seen as a neutral endeavor, but the interns were not yet positioned to see connections between literacy learning and social inequities.

The interns' cultural experiences and literacy understandings positioned them in particular ways for exploring intersections literacy and Whiteness in Block III. Their positionality also suggested implications that might support preservice teacher growth and continued progress in research related to culturally responsive literacy instruction.

Implications for Theory, Practice, and Research

The findings from this chapter point to several implications for theory, practice, and research associated with the way in which preservice teachers are positioned to consider critical multiculturalism – particularly issues of Whiteness – in relation to literacy instruction.

Theory

The interns' experiences illuminated both the accessibility and the limitations of sociocultural theory in preparing teachers for literacy instruction with culturally diverse learners. The interns in this study fairly consistently adopted the components of sociocultural theory into their own educational philosophies. They recognized that children's social experiences shaped the understandings and knowledge that they brought with them and developed in the classroom. In addition, they saw teaching as assisting and described their intentions to respond to individual learning needs in their literacy instruction. They seemed to need more time and experience exploring sociocultural theory in practice in order to develop firm understandings of knowledge as cultural

content and competent participation and performance as situative, but generally speaking, it proved to be a very accessible theory for the interns.

Such was not the case for critical literacy. Although the interns had been exposed to critical literacy in Blocks I and II, it did not influence their understandings of literacy in any notable fashion. As we consider the theoretical foundations preservice teachers need in order to teach literacy in classrooms with culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse student populations, it is important to consider the attitudes and beliefs preservice teachers must develop in order to be receptive to critical theory and look for ways to present critical theory that make it more accessible to undergraduate students, an idea that will be further developed in Chapter 5.

Practice

The interns' positioning points to three implications for teacher education programs. First, preservice teachers need help to see Whiteness and its consequences in education. They do not see it simply because they are placed in culturally, racially, and linguistically diverse classrooms and schooled in sociocultural theory. Before entering Block III, the interns were exposed to diverse classrooms and sociocultural theories of learning, but they continued to ascribe to colorblind thinking, and maintained their sense of being cultureless in spite of these experiences. This is not surprising given that "preservice teachers deliberately and often subconsciously do not think about the enormous, central, and profound influences of color and culture in teaching and learning" (Milner, 2006, p. 352). Furthermore they are members of a cultural group that carefully teaches them not to recognize White privilege (McIntosh, 1990). Thus, teacher education programs have an important responsibility to make Whiteness an integrated and explicit

part of the teacher education curriculum across content areas. The Block III interns were about to be explicitly exposed to Whiteness and White privilege, but they were not ideally prepared yet to take on these considerations deeply.

Second, preservice teachers need opportunities to consider themselves in relation to their students and the curriculum. Coming into Block III, the interns were not yet postioned to understand Vygotsky's (1997) notion of the space between between themselves, their students, and the curriculum being active and interactive. Preservice teachers cannot help but bring their race and culture into learning interactions with them. They need opportunities to consider how their racial, cultural, and linguistic backgrounds influence interactions and interpretations in the space Vygotsky (1997) intended to be active between the teacher and student. We, as teacher educators, should be more explicit in helping preservice teachers interrogate Whiteness in the "active spaces" and designing activities that help them access these active spaces. I would like to point to Milner's (2006) critical reflection questions (See Appendix H) as one possible starting point for helping preservice teachers critically examine the relational spaces between themselves and their students. These questions focus on what Milner refers to as "relational reflection" and prompt preservice teacher interns to consider themselves and their own experiences, perspectives, beliefs, and backgrounds *in conjunction with, comparison with,* and *contrast to* their students' and their students' communities with questions such as "How will my race influence my work as a teacher with students of color?" and "What is the effect of race on my thinking, beliefs, and actions?"

In addition, we should think about ways to deconstruct the curriculum in these intersecting spaces. How might we structure activities for preservice teachers that help

them see the influence of Whiteness on the standard curriculum and the way such a curriculum positions the students and the teacher in those interactions? One activity that resonated with the interns occurred in their multicultural course and involved looking critically at Thanksgiving in order to see the way the traditional story presented the White perspective, but did not tell the Native Americans' side of the story. As teacher educators, we can use a critical Whiteness lens to examine the Thanksgiving story and other texts and elements of the traditional curriculum commonly used in classrooms. We can encourage preservice teachers to consider whose voices are privileged and whose are silenced by the content. For example, they might start to look at the story from the perspective of one of the students in their field placement classes. How would their student interpret the story based on their racial and cultural experiences? How is the students' home language legitimized or silenced by the text? They might also consider their own relationship to the text. How are they able to relate to the text? How does it position them differently from their students as a knowledge-holder?

Looking at a piece of the curriculum more deeply then allows preservice teachers to consider the consequences of a White-influenced curriculum. What consequences does such a curriculum have on students' agency, identity, and power? How are the teacher's agency, identity, and power reinforced? Activities and reflective questions like these can help preservice teachers begin looking at these interactional spaces with a critical lens. Preservice teachers need opportunities to understand Whiteness, to recognize why it matters in classroom spaces, and to identify it in practice so that it can be interrupted. An awareness of Whiteness can help them reflect on these active spaces and renegotiate these spaces as cultural crossroads.

In addition to making preservice teachers aware of Whiteness in "active spaces," preservice teachers need opportunities to develop cultural competence. A single multicultural course, even when paired with a field placement, is an inadequate way for preservice teachers to develop the cultural competence needed for effective culturally responsive teaching (Lawrence, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; Weisman & Garza, 2002). In fact, this study points to the fact that preservice teachers need more than general knowledge about cultural groups. They need practical ways to learn about students' backgrounds and to see how that information can be used in literacy instruction.

Research

Analyzing the interns' cultural autobiographies and their understandings of literacy provided a snapshot of how they were situated to encounter intersections of Whiteness and literacy at the beginning of Block III. From a research perspective, this research task actually provided a very limited glimpse of the preservice teachers in the study.

To begin with, collecting and analyzing written reflective prompts from the interns generated a picture of them at a single point in time. Although the interns' written reflections provided insight into their positioning at the beginning of the study, the data did not reveal how they arrived at this point of development. Consequently, the data cannot enlighten us as to why particular aspects of sociocultural theory are more accessible to them than others. Neither can it describe the interns' ineffectual experiences with critical theory or reveal how other experiences might be more relevant in their development. Many research studies utilize students' written reflections such as cultural autobiographies and journals to explore their thoughts about culture, race, and

teaching (Clark & Medina, 2000; Florio-Ruane, 1994; Garmon, 1998; Milner, 2003; Pewewardy, 2005; Xu, 2000). While these studies provide insight into preservice teachers' attitudes and beliefs, they are limited to a single point in time. We need further research that looks longitudinally at interns' development if we hope to capture and understand the way preservice teachers develop racial identity awareness and cultural competency and carry them into teaching.

In addition to capturing just one moment in time, this snapshot was also limiting in that it only provides access to the interns' idealized actions. Their written reflections described what they thought they would do. They discussed the ideas that they believed would guide their teaching, and they described the teaching actions they planned to enact, but those were only reflective thoughts, not yet actualized in practice. In a critical framework, a merging of reflective thought and action – praxis – is essential (Freire, 2000). Actions cannot simply be imagined; they must be lived.

The limitations of this research point to two implications for future research. First, we need to become more sophisticated at designing research that attends to the space between the teacher and the students. Second, if we are really interested in changing classrooms, we need a developmental, longitudinal approach that is not content with one moment in time but looks for change over time and concerns itself with the movement from theory to practice. It is important to gain an understanding of preservice teacher development, but we also must see how their movement towards a theory of culturally responsive pedagogy is actualized in their classroom practices.

Summary

The interns' cultural autobiographies and understandings of literacy provided an opportunity to examine how this particular group of preservice teachers was situated to encounter the infusion of critical multicultural into their literacy methods course at the beginning of Block III. In looking specifically at the interns' cultural positioning, it became evident that – though they were typical White teacher education candidates – their early experiences with diversity at the university were already shaping their thinking and were providing a diverse context in which they could process and evaluate new ideas. In addition, they mainly ascribed to a technical understanding of literacy as reading and writing with meaning; however, their university experiences were helping them think of literacy teaching as a sociocultural endeavor.

Exploring the intersections of these two areas exposed the interns' grounding in sociocultural theory as a foundation for considering culture in relation to literacy, but it also exposed some of the challenges they still faced in considering literacy teaching as a critical cultural undertaking. Building from this foundation, the next chapter describes what happens when the interns experienced principles of critical multiculturalism infused in their literacy methods course.

CHAPTER 5: BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN LITERACY AND RACE

> Intern 4: One question I had is why you guys chose to do those kinds of invitations in this particular class….Those invitations really had – besides just reading, I guess – but the topics had nothing to do with this class in particular.
>
> Intern 13: Well she [Susan] said when she opened it up that they wanted to blur the lines between literacy and race or racial discussions, diversity, so that's probably why. (Invitation Debrief, 9/13/10)

This interchange occurred during the large group conversation following the interns' first day of work with invitations, and it captures the novelty of considering race in relation to literacy instruction. We know and understand from the research that race matters in teaching and learning (G. R. Howard, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 1995a; Marx, 2006; National Center for Education Statistics, 2010; Sleeter, 2008). Unexamined Whiteness brings particular assumptions into the interactions that frame literacy learning experiences for students. Teachers who have not considered the influence of Whiteness in teaching, their own lives, and the lives of their students tend to assume that schooling provides equal access and opportunities for all students to learn. They bring unconscious categorizing, judgment, and discrimination based on race and make assumptions that contribute to institutional racism, reinforce racial hierarchies, and contribute to deficit models of students of color (Grinage, 2011). Furthermore, they are unable to recognize how practices such as their curriculum choices, expectations of students, testing procedures, instructional practices, and even more pedestrian tasks such as seating arrangements and opportunities for participation in learning reproduce racial and cultural hegemony in school practices (T. C. Howard, 2010).

In the quest to help preservice teachers consider the relevance of Whiteness in literacy teaching, Diane, Susan, and I brought issues of Whiteness into the literacy

methods courses. Although Whiteness considers many aspects of privilege, the investigations of Whiteness we used with the interns tended to focus predominantly on issues of race. This decision reflected both our own growing awareness of the influence of race in education as well as our belief that the interns had probably not grappled much with racial identity issues.

This chapter describes what happened when the interns encountered explorations of Whiteness in Block III. It discusses the ways they interacted with some of the infused course content and also reveals the ideas they developed – and failed to develop – about culturally responsive literacy teaching as a result of the course infusion.

The first sub-section of this chapter describes the four course structures that served as data sources for this chapter. Then the next two sub-sections present the findings in two parts based on interns' mindset work and applications of content. A discussion of the findings then situates the relevancy of the interns' experiences with current literature in the field. The chapter concludes with implications for theory, practice, and research.

Overview of Course Structures for Participation

Interns' thinking and processing of course content was made visible through their participation in four course learning structures: large group conversations, online forums, invitations, and a reflective in-class writing assignment used to prompt small group conversations. Although there were many more learning opportunities during the 6-week course, these four structures intentionally focused on infusing critical multiculturalism, particularly investigations of Whiteness, into the literacy methods curriculum. Chapter 3

describes the particular pieces of data that I used from each structure and provides a rationale for the selection of these data.

As I began analyzing the data, it became apparent that there were differences in the content of each structure and the processes interns used for exploring information within a given structure. This made it initially difficult to see common themes across the structures.

There were three large group conversations included in my analysis – henceforth, labeled Conversation 1, Conversation 2, and Conversation 3. Conversation 1 occurred at the end of the second full day of class and corresponded to the first half of "Preparing White Teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation" (Richert, et al., 2009). Conversation 2 occurred two weeks later and focused on the second half of the reading. Conversation 3 took place in the fourth week of class and focused on the reading "Disproportionate Representation of African American Students in Special Education: Acknowledging the Role of White Privilege and Racism" (Blanchett, 2006). These large group conversations were markedly public, mostly focusing on developing awareness of Whiteness, and attended little to the practical side of culturally responsive teaching.

The online forums approached critical multiculturalism from a different angle. They invited interns to reflect on practice-oriented readings that worked to decenter the norms of Whiteness by questioning classroom practices used with English Language Learners (ELLs) and suggesting alternative literacy strategies. These online forums were more private and intimate in tone than the large-group conversations and, with all students generally contributing equally, were notably a more equitable structure for student participation.

The invitations served as a literacy-based means for interns to examine their own cultural identity and raise their awareness of Whiteness in society. Intended to model the types of literacy activities the interns could use with students, the invitations encouraged social and collaborative literacy experiences. They were open-ended and allowed for varied responses and levels of engagement.

The reflective writing assignments and subsequent small group conversations enabled the interns to connect their experiences in the course with their envisioned classroom practices. Consequently, the interns frequently referred back to the conversations, online forums, and invitations in their reflective freewrites and conversations as they described the significance of these structures in shaping their visions of teaching.

My analysis of intern participation in these four learning structures revealed a great deal about the strengths and weaknesses of the course design and the tensions involved for myself and the instructors as we facilitated and observed course participation, but more importantly – and what I have chosen to discuss in greater depth below – the analysis showed how the interns engaged in two simultaneous kinds of work across these course structures. First, they were doing mindset work related to the critical multicultural concepts they were encountering in the course – namely Whiteness. Second, they were doing application work. They were striving to understand how the ideas they encountered in the course would influence their teaching practices. This is not to say that large group conversations, online forums, invitations, and reflective freewrites and conversations supported the two kinds of work equally, but overall these were two significant types of work the interns were doing across all four structures. The findings

presented describe the interns' incremental and sometimes fractured sense-making experiences as they engaged in mindset and application work in a well-intentioned, but still-developing methods infusion course called Block III.

Mindset Work: Encountering Whiteness

Whiteness, presented through a framework of critical multiculturalism and predominantly focused on racial awareness, was an integral part of the course curriculum in Block III. As such, the infused course content situated schools as social institutions, challenged the interns to develop teaching practices grounded in awareness of social inequities, exposed interns to differences and other versions of reality, and encouraged the interns to confront the culture of Whiteness and the privileges it bestows. As the interns encountered these ideas in the course, it was apparent that these were fairly new concepts for the interns. Approximately one-third of the interns had been briefly exposed to Whiteness and White Privilege during one session of their multicultural foundations course in Block I, but the rest were encountering the concepts and terminology for the first time in Block III. Intern 3 reminded us of this reality when she said the following: "It mentions White Privilege. We kind of discussed [that] we wished they [the authors] would've defined what they meant by it" (Conversation 2).

The findings suggest that the interns were growing in their awareness of Whiteness, race, culture, and privilege in education, but it was not easy work. Throughout the course, the interns' sense-making journey included three distinct responses: avoidance, explaining away, and emerging acknowledgment. These responses did not collectively demonstrate a linear progression from one type of response to the next but rather individual interns as well as changing content and contexts brought about

different responses at different times. Each of these three common responses are described in the following sub-sections, capturing interns' responses to principles of critical multiculturalism in Block III.

Avoidance

One of the ways the interns responded to the critical multicultural content in the course was by avoiding naming and identifying Whiteness. There are several examples from the course that demonstrate the nature of avoidance responses. In one instance, Intern 5 was engaged in the World is a Village invitation – an invitation that addressed inequities in world wealth and living conditions. As the intern reflected on the information he had learned during the invitation, he told his fellow group members: "I am not going to be bothered by people and places that I can't see who are disadvantaged, so out of sight out of mind." His comment captures the essence of the avoidance response. It is like saying, "If I do not see it, then I can pretend it does not exist" and as Intern 5 said – "not lose any sleep over it."

There were other ways and times in the class that the interns avoided engaging with material related to Whiteness when they encountered it. The most apparent instances of avoidance occurred during large group conversations. It was noticeable that some of the interns remained quiet throughout the large group conversations related to Whiteness. Though short, Conversation 1 included only six interns. The lengthier Conversation 2 included contributions from 12 interns, and in Conversation 3, only 8 interns spoke. This means that at least half of the interns were silent in every conversation. And, over the course of the three conversations analyzed, eight of the interns did not share any of their own thinking during the large group conversations.

Silence allowed the interns to avoid publicly interacting with the concepts. Although it is impossible to know if the interns were engaging and attempting to understand the material on a personal level, silence has been documented as a strategy that White female preservice teachers use to distance themselves from an antiracist curriculum (Case & Hemmings, 2005). Therefore, the interns' silence could have been one way to avoid naming and identifying the consequences of Whiteness.

Two other marked instances of avoidance occurred during invitations. The following dialogue is an excerpt from the group at the *A Day in the Life* invitation. The invitation asked the interns to read the stories of two female educators – one a White college instructor and one an African American principal – who discussed the effects of Whiteness on their daily lives. The following dialogue occurred when the interns were in the process of discussing several questions related to the readings:

> Intern 18: [reading aloud question 2] "Have you experienced institutional racism in your life? What was its impact on you?"
>
> 1: Besides those stories [the police pulling their group over for speeding] it's never really happened to me.
>
> 10: I don't know what it means by institutional racism.
>
> 1: Like authority people? People of authority? or... I don't know what it means either.
>
> 15: Like at schools or something?
>
> 18: [reading aloud the third question] "What can we learn from these stories?"

The group quickly moved from the question about institutional racism to the next question without discussing possible answers. It appears that they avoided the question because they did not know what the term "institutional racism" meant. Though the interns had discussed aspects of institutional racism in the large group conversations prior

to their participation in invitations, the term had never been explicitly brought up and defined in the large group conversations prior to the invitations. However, Intern 15 was starting to unpack and consider what it might mean when her peer began reading the next question. It is impossible to know from this exchange the reasons the interns avoided discussing institutional racism. Their avoidance may have resulted from a lack of familiarity with the terminology, but it also may have represented an unwillingness to tread into the murkiness of defining and considering institutional racism.

Figure 2

My People Collage

The second instance of avoidance in invitations occurred during the My People invitation. This invitation asked the interns to read a children's book where a poem, *My People* by Langston Hughes, was accompanied by photographs of dark-skinned individuals. The interns were then invited to create their own "My People" collages that visually represented their experiences with Whiteness. Several groups followed these directions, but one group created a very different product. One of the interns in the group suggested doing a collage of their future classroom instead of their own lives. The other

group members agreed to this request, preparing a collective – rather than individual – product (See Figure 2).

By creating this product, the interns in this group avoided naming and identifying Whiteness in their own lives. Instead, they turned to an idealized depiction of reality. They represented people from various races, cultures, and religions; and they added idealistic words and phrases such as: all smiles; embracing diversity, changing lives; international; love learning; and accepting diversity, embracing inclusion. Their collective product neither represented their lived reality of Whiteness nor their future students' lived reality of being "others" in a classroom with a White teacher. Instead, their avoidance let them drift back into their unexamined, idealistic visions of "embracing" and "welcoming" differences as captured in Chapter 4. Their imagined reality of harmony and "easy" diversity in the classroom kept them from examining their own experiences with Whiteness, and it kept them from depicting the diversity of themselves and their future students accurately. As these examples demonstrate, avoidance responses appeared throughout the semester, but avoidance was not the only response the interns used to resist naming and identifying Whiteness.

Explaining Away

As Chapter 4 evidenced, the interns entered their Block III class with pre-existing schema and particular understandings of living, operating, and being in the world. The interns' pre-existing narratives and personal experiences, at times, situated them to dismiss and explain away other ways of seeing the world. For example, during the large group conversations, the interns contradicted and dismissed the effects of Whiteness in education on multiple occasions. In Conversation 3, Intern 20 drew upon the idea that

poverty, not race is responsible for educational inequities. She said, "In school districts that are poor, don't all students regardless of color or ethnic whatever, suffer the same?" In this way, Intern 20 situated economic injustice as the primary oppressive condition that makes learning inequitable. This is not an unusual response. According to Gorski (2012), White people commonly point to poverty or class in order to dismiss the problem of racism. In doing so, they fail to examine the deep connections between class and race in U.S. society, making it easy to explain away the consequences of Whiteness and difficult to consider how the intersections of different forms of oppression, such as racism, sexism, and ableism, intersect in creating unjust conditions.

Another dominant narrative brought up in the large group conversations was grounded in meritocratic thinking. Meritocratic thinking helped the interns explain away inequitable structural conditions by asserting that an individual's hard work and dedication lead to success. This pull-yourself-up-by-your-bootstraps mentality revealed itself in two different ways in Conversation 3. Intern 3 first employed meritocratic thinking in response to Intern 11's consideration of funding inequities in schools:

> Intern 11: I said it's like a cycle because they don't get the proper education they need so they end up getting a minimum wage job. When they have kids, the same cycle repeats itself. They never have the tax money to spend to give to their schools. So, I just feel like it's a never ending process, and unless we do something differently with the way schools are funded it's never going to change.
>
> Intern 3: I understand that and I am not going to say white privilege doesn't exist but not every teacher is so…doesn't have that racial viewpoint. Then it's like with this quote, at what point does that senior in high school need to take responsibility for what they do in the work? I mean you have school and you have workforce. If they know they need a job then where can they go to find the resources to build a resume, find resources? I know without a proper education, or knowing what they need to graduate it's going to make a difference, but I mean there are White students that don't graduate high

> school. And so I guess it comes to my point about at what point does race need to be put aside and it's the responsibility of that individual?

The mentality that individuals create their own opportunities for success is a dominant narrative that is prevalent among White pre-service teachers (Castro, 2010). Intern 3 was drawing from what she knew about the world as she responded to her peer, and in doing so, she employed a dominant narrative that contradicted the systemic and cyclical inequities she was encountering as she learned about Whiteness.

Later in the conversation, Intern 4 engaged a modified version of meritocratic thinking to explain why schools were failing students of color. Rather than considering the possibility of systemic racism and classism, the intern found fault with individual principals and schools.

> I felt like they were still trying to find something wrong, like even if it was equal, there still was something wrong there. And then that goes well whose fault is that? Is that the principal hiring or …I guess the thing is where is it coming from? [Diane explained the practice of limited licenses in high need areas, and Intern 4 continued…] So I understand that so then it goes to…it's obviously the school's fault.

The interns employed dominant narratives that were ingrained as part of their schemas in response to considerations of Whiteness, and by doing so, they were able to excuse, or explain away its consequences.

Another way the interns' schema served to explain away Whiteness was by using their personal experiences to determine reality. At times, these experiences kept them from considering the impact Whiteness might have on others' realities or perspectives. For example, Intern 4 offered excuses that explained away an example of how Whiteness influenced the school curriculum because it was not her experience. In Conversation 3, Diane described the omission of the Japanese internment from her history books in high

school as an example of Whiteness influencing the school curriculum. Intern 4 responded, "I think it depends on the time because I remember learning about that in high school so I think it depends on when…it just depends on timing and when it happened."

Intern 10 also took up this manner of explaining away another's experience with Whiteness because it differed from his own in both his small group discussion at *A Day in the Life* invitation and his report to the whole class. This intern dismissed the example of White Privilege cited in one of the readings by saying, "But…they lived in Missouri, right? So, I mean very Midwest, and I said that, I mean we have black new anchors here in [our city], so I guess it depends on where you live, too." These examples illustrate how the interns' personal experiences did not position them to see the effects of Whiteness in society.

Emerging Acknowledgment

In spite of what felt like great resistance at times, the interns also began acknowledging Whiteness and other aspects of critical multiculturalism in the world around them. The following examples expose the mindset work the interns were doing as they began to see and name Whiteness and other elements of critical multiculturalism in society.

First, the interns' interpretation of racism shifted across the course. In their cultural autobiographies, the interns tended to distance themselves from participation in racism by defining it as negative beliefs and attitudes against groups and attributing it to past generations. However, there was a recognizable shift in the interns' thinking during the large group conversations. In these discussions, the interns developed a conception of racism as *present* and *subtle* in society. In Conversation 1, Intern 5 and Intern 13 brought

up some personal examples that illustrated the way racist attitudes and beliefs continue to create oppressive conditions in the present with Intern 5 drawing the conclusion that "it's something that is still looming over people." In Conversation 3, Intern 10 simultaneously confirmed the subtlety of racism and explored his own unintentional participation in it:

> I guess listening to the conversation and reading this, even though we don't…I don't think of that as racism – not wanting to teach in an urban school – in a way it is. Yeah, I don't stand in front of an IPS school and burn a cross with my hood on – I don't even own a hood so I shouldn't say my hood on – but that's not the only form of racism there is.

The comments from Intern 10, 5, and 13 demonstrate how some of the interns were publicly beginning to acknowledge the present and subtle nature of racism in society and their own lives.

Second, there were instances in the large group conversations where the interns offered emerging acknowledgements of structural inequities regarding school curricula and funding, although they did so without employing the specific terminology usually assigned to such ideas (i.e., "institutional racism," "systemic inequities," or "structural inequities"). For example, Intern 11 made multiple connections between school curriculum and White Privilege:

> We, as White people, we're so privileged. Obviously, it's called White privilege, but oh, there are so many different things – like the ISTEP tests are set forth for us, curriculum just in general is. Read the history books. Ninety-nine percent of the content is filled with stuff about Caucasian people. (Conversation 2)

Intern 22 also identified a specific example of the influence of Whiteness on the traditional curriculum:

> It's related to Columbus landing in America. We read about him landing in America and exploring the land but we need to look at it also from the Native

> American's perspective as well – what they felt or experienced in the landing. (Conversation 2)

Intern 22's comment recognizes that Native American voices are missing in the traditional curriculum. These examples show some emerging acknowledgments of schools perpetuating social inequities in the curriculum. Some interns also saw and named structural inequities in school funding as well. In Conversation 3, Intern 13 drew the following conclusion:

> I think it probably is more purposeful. The people, they try to construct a tax structure that will benefit them. They're not necessarily thinking so that the poor schools, the poor areas you know get less money for their schools, but they think that would allocate…you know if we live in really nice houses, we want good schools. So I think that probably is a little bit intentional.

These examples from discussions on curriculum and finding demonstrate interns' emerging acknowledgements of structural inequities using fairly rudimentary and unsophisticated terminology.

A third area where emerging acknowledgments of critical multiculturalism occurred was related to the interns' willingness to see and consider different perspectives. Intern 5 was a very articulate student who always contributed thoughtful and reflective comments on the assigned readings. In Conversation 1, he made the astute observation that his Whiteness influences the way others see him:

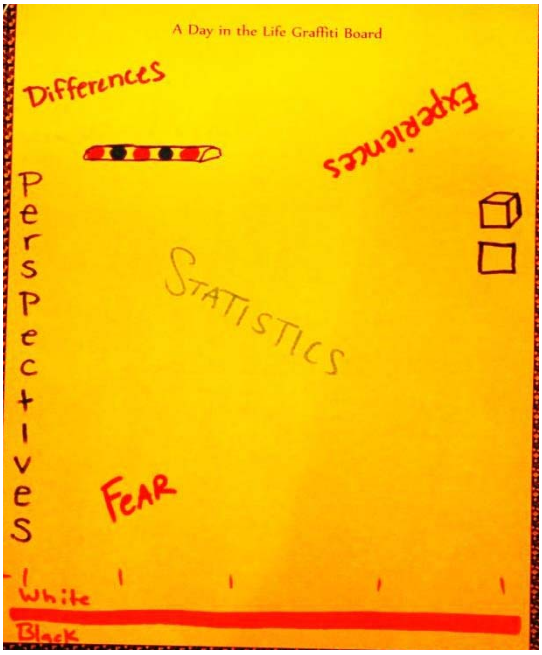
> Regardless of what my feelings are toward other people, because I'm white and a male, and don't speak with a noticeable dialect, I'm going to be viewed by my African American students, other students a certain way because of that.

Although this comment did not delve deeply into why he would be seen differently, it still revealed an emerging awareness that people have different perspectives on Whiteness.

The interns who participated in the *A Day in the Life* invitation also considered different perspectives. After the interns discussed the stories of two educators' experiences with Whiteness in the work place, they worked together to create a graffiti board (See Figure 3) that captured the gist of their conversation.

Figure 3

A Day in the Life Graffiti Board



As the interns were creating their graffiti board, Intern 10 and Intern 18 engaged in the following interchange:

> 18: Oh, you're drawing again.
> 10: I'll explain what I'm drawing. I'm drawing a timeline of thinking about race. That's someone who's black. That's someone who's white. We don't think about race.
> 18: We don't think about it. They think about it all the time.

Although this acknowledgment seems simple, it demonstrates the way these two interns realized that their lived reality with race was different than a black person's would

be. In addition, their group discussed and drew a cube and a square on their graffiti board. Intern 1 later explained the drawing to the class:

> The bottom square, so that's what people usually see is like the surface of the person. And then we did the cube as what's actually going on. You don't really see the background of everyone's lives, so you can't really know a person unless you can see the whole thing. (Invitation Debrief, 9/13/10)

The idea that people view things from different perspectives was a significant insight for the interns in this invitation. Some of them returned to the idea in later reflections about the invitations. Intern 1 explained, "I learned about different perspectives and learned how I didn't notice some of the issues people deal with on a daily basis." And Intern 15 wrote, "I learned that people of different cultures and races have different perspectives based on their own experiences." Recognizing that people's lived experiences shape their realities was a significant emerging acknowledgment that the interns verbalized as they created their graffiti board and reflected on their experience with the invitation.

Another way some of the interns demonstrated this readiness to see and consider different perspectives occurred as the interns discussed English Language Learners in their online forum discussions. Five of them took up the perspectives of these students saying such things as: "If I were put in a classroom where everything was a different culture I would feel very timid and at a disadvantage from everyone else" (Intern 15). Intern 9 wrote, "It is hard to put yourself in the shoes of those young learners….I certaintly [*sic*] wouldn't have wanted to speak out in another language I was unfamiliar with, or communicate through a foreign language only." These interns tried to consider what learning would be like for students who are denied their native language in classrooms. This ability and willingness to think about issues from perspectives other

than their own helps preservice teachers address complex issues like race and inequity (Gere, Buehler, Dallavis, & Haviland, 2009).

The fourth example of emerging acknowledgments traces the story of an individual intern. Intern 20 was a very vocal student in the large group conversations. At 42 years old, she was the second-oldest student in the class, and she also appeared to be one of the most interested and engaged. She was passionate about teaching and committed to becoming the best educator she could be. Interestingly, at the beginning of the course her demeanor and her comments indicated a skeptical willingness to consider Whiteness:

> I'm not necessarily saying I believe this or I don't believe it, but …how much of it is…how much of it is it creating in our own…I'm not saying it does exist or doesn't but how much of it is created in our own mind? You know how much of it is not we say it is therefore it is, now we got to call it something. I really do believe to some extent that there is this Whiteness around us, but at the same time it's a theory and how much of it is…. (Conversation 1)

Extending this general questioning of Whiteness theory, she also raised questions about the intentionality of Whiteness. She was the intern that brought up the dominant narrative that poverty – regardless of race and ethnicity – was responsible for educational inequities.

Intern 20's public stance seemed a bit confrontational regarding issues related to race. Her contributions to the group conversations were reflective, but also skeptical. But mid-way through the course, Intern 20's defensiveness about Whiteness and White privilege noticeably dissolved. From the outside looking in, Intern 20's transformation happened on the first day of invitations. She and two others spent the entire session working on the *What About White Privilege* invitation. They watched a video about White privilege, stopping frequently to discuss the content. They also read and discussed

Peggy McIntosh's (1990) article "Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack." At the end of this day, Intern 20 declared that Whiteness was "elusive." She explained that "you really can't grab onto it and really understand what it really is." She went on to conclude: "While I don't completely understand White privilege and every aspect of it, I believe it exists. I absolutely believe it exists." Intern 20 went from a skeptical consideration of Whiteness to a declaration that it is elusive but "absolutely" exists.

Intern 20's comment that Whiteness is elusive set the stage for the fifth and final way the interns demonstrated emerging acknowledgments of Whiteness during the course. The interns began to notice and name the cultural, linguistic, and racial undercurrents present and – at times – subverted in classrooms. In their online discussions, four of the interns problematized the English-only practices they had observed in previous field experiences. Intern 12's response typified this stance: "I heard over and over teachers telling students to speak English only… I now know that using students' native language and culture will only add resouces [*sic*] for academic success."

In addition, in their reflective freewrites and conversations, the interns nearly unanimously described their growing awareness of the racial and cultural tensions and subtexts that exist in urban classrooms. As Intern 18 declared: "I'll be hearing these things [social issues] in classrooms, and I'm really going to have to step up and talk to the kids about it and not just ignore it" (Reflective Conversation). Not only were they beginning to see the cultural and racial tensions and undercurrents in the class, but they were also starting to recognize when teachers failed to acknowledge classrooms as cultured and racialized spaces. Stories from Intern 3 and Intern 17 during their reflective conversations illustrate how the interns were now tuning into race and culture in their

current field placements. Intern 17 had observed one of her students draw from cultural resources in her writing, but she was disturbed by the way the other children called the student "racist" and "two-faced" when they read her story. She noted that "it's [race is] obviously a big part and they want to talk about it," but when the intern brought it to the attention of her mentor teacher, the teacher did nothing. In a similar vein, Intern 3 explained that her second grade students were using cultural and racial slurs to make fun of others and she noted that "the teacher, she just kind of looked at us and then walked away." She concluded: "We're starting to realize that comments get made during class and kids want to talk about it which is what we've been reading about…it's just the teacher's always scared to bring it up." Their verbal commitments and the stories the interns shared indicate a growing awareness of racial issues on a micro level in the classroom.

The interns were clearly still emerging in their understandings of critical multiculturalism, and Whiteness in particular, but they had begun noticing and naming racial and social inequities that were not visible to them before Block III.

Teaching Application Work

Throughout the course and particularly in their reflective freewrites, the interns described the ways in which they planned to transfer ideas from the course into practice. At this point in the study, the teaching application work represented the interns' imagined classroom practices. They were still awaiting teaching opportunities that would allow them to actualize their aspirations. The findings in this section discuss how the interns reiterated and extended previous teaching commitments as well as describing the new understandings of culturally responsive teaching they generated in the course.

Reiterating and Extending Existing Ideas

As the interns discussed their teaching intentions, they reiterated and extended the commitment they held at the beginning of the course to use children's linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the classroom. In their online forum discussions, the interns began identifying literacy-specific strategies that might help them value students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds during instruction. After reading several articles about teaching literacy to ELLs, some interns expressed a general gratitude for learning new strategies to help them make their literacy instruction more responsive to their diverse students. Intern 19 typified this appreciation: "It was exciting to read all the examples and possible ways to incorporate language differences and promote literacy in the classroom." But in other cases, the interns named and described some of the distinct strategies that resonated with them. Some of the strategies mentioned included: having families create materials in their native language to use for instructional purposes (Intern 15), having older ELLs write bilingual books to use with younger ELLs (Intern1), having students do reader's theater (Intern 20), and using rhyming and predictable books (Intern 14). The interns expressed a greater confidence in their ability to make learning relevant to students' lives by employing literacy-specific strategies.

In addition to identifying new literacy strategies – particularly those focused on ELLs – the interns also named community-building as an important vehicle they could use to gain insight into their students' lives outside of the classroom. Intern 16 highlighted the centrality of this concept in the opening sentence of her reflective freewrite: "The first thing I hope to take with me is the idea of building community." Some of the interns recognized that community-building was significant because it gave

them insight into students' lives. Intern 24 typified how interns connected community-building to making instruction relevant to students' lives: "I know that by implementing it [community-building] in the classroom it will help me learn more about my students so that we are able to plan our instruction better." For the interns, literacy teaching was inseparable from having a positive and collaborative classroom community.

New Ideas about Culturally Responsive Teaching

The interns' coursework also showed the development of new ideas and a new vision of culturally responsive literacy instruction that was multifaceted. It focused on having conversations about race in the classroom and considered literacy activities as tools for initiating such discussions. In addition, the interns' vision anticipated raising student awareness in a similar fashion to their own Block III experience. Finally, it recognized the personal discomfort the interns expected to experience in their efforts to be culturally responsive.

Conversations about race. During the Block III course, the interns identified a commitment to having conversations with students about culture and race. They saw these "courageous conversations" (Singleton & Hays, 2008) as the primary way they would be culturally responsive in the classroom. Intern 18's comment from a reflective freewrite demonstrates the role of conversations in being culturally responsive: "Culturally responsive teaching will be something that is important to my teaching. I know there will be issues or topics brought up in my classroom and knowing how to handle talk about them will benefit my students and myself." Although not everyone was as explicit in naming conversations as the embodiment of culturally responsive teaching, many of the interns emphasized conversations with students as their main way for

engaging with culture in the classroom. As Intern 20 summarized, "I have been made more aware of the need to consciously work toward conversations and activities that are culturally diverse and allow for the inclusion of all students" (Reflective freewrite). In thinking about the significance of conversations in the classroom, some of the interns discussed conversations as ways to be responsive to students' learning needs. Intern 15's reflective freewrite developed this position:

> I think implementing conversations about culture, race, issues, etc. will help students be able to relate to each other better. When students learn about these differences between people it can help them adapt to learning. This can help build community within the classroom and open new windows for learning. Issues about race and culture exist and children need to understand this and accept these issues. It allows for students to talk about feelings on a topic of importance to them.

The interns were nearly unanimously committed to having conversations about culture, race, and other such issues with students, but a few interns challenged and extended this understanding of culturally responsive teaching.

Intern 1 directly challenged the emphasis her peers placed on conversations. She resisted the idea of openly addressing challenging topics with students and took particular issue with having conversations about race in the classroom:

> I feel like the conversations about race go in a continuous circle. It's frustrating to talk about because there doesn't seem to be an end, no solution. I feel that could be frustrating with students to. A lot of students like when there's an answer and if they are asking questions and I don't have the answers I feel they might feel that there is no answer and become discouraged. (Reflective freewrite)

Although she later expressed a willingness to learn about "each individual and their culture [underline in original text]," and implement that in her classroom, she remained "unsure about races and how I[she] would/should approach it." Intern 1's resistance to

conversations stood out notably from the common commitment other interns expressed to engage in courageous conversations with students.

Extended understandings. A few interns presented alternate or extended considerations of culturally responsive teaching practices. Intern 11, for example, described her intentions to examine and change the curriculum to make it more inclusive. She explained:

> I never realized how focused our curriculum is on the white culture….In my student teaching classroom and all of my future classrooms I hope to implement changes in this area. I want to take opportunities such as invitations, community building activities, etc. to talk about and build upon these ideas. I think it is very important to look at ideas from all perspectives and I realize now that even though I am white I can, and my students can, grapple with these ideas. (Reflective freewrite)

Although no other interns considered modifying the curriculum as a means to be more culturally responsive, several of her peers identified the importance of text-selection in culturally responsive teaching. They talked about being "more conscious" when selecting read-alouds (Intern 20), making sure read-alouds were "well-selected" so they could lead to open discussions (Intern 7), and using read-alouds to "raise the level of cultural awareness" (Intern 19). Intern 3 spoke specifically about her growing understanding of book-selection:

> I have learned how much I need to pay attention to cultures and race. I purchase books because of the topic/story. I need to make myself more aware of the color of the characters and different cultures. To me, this is minor, but it might mean more to a minority race/culture. (Reflective freewrite)

These examples illustrate that a few of the interns extended considerations of culturally responsive teaching to areas beyond conversations about race and culture, but as the interns developed their ideas of literacy activities in the classroom, it became evident that

the primary aim of their literacy activities – including text selection – was still focused on generating conversations with students.

Literacy activities as springboards to conversations about race. Multiple times in their reflections, the interns described how they envisioned literacy activities as springboards for discussions about "culture, race, issues, etc" (Intern 15). Intern 16 typified this connection between literacy activities and conversations by saying: "Invitations and read alouds are great ways to allow children to open up about these important topics that may be difficult to discuss." Intern 17 wrote, "It [an invitation] is a great way to have kids start their own conversations that begin with critical issues." Intern 15 explained, "Using different activities to implement these discussions are a great way to allow students to think and dig deep into their feelings. Some activities I would like to use are read alouds and invitations." The interns identified read-alouds and invitations as literacy techniques they would use for initiating conversations with students.

Relevance of course experience. As the interns discussed the literacy activities from the course, their rationale for placing such great emphasis on conversations became clear. In the course, the interns engaged in many conversations about race and culture. Literacy activities were their springboards for conversations – large group discussions, online forums, small group conversations following invitations, etc. Intern 17's reflective freewrite demonstrated the connection she saw between her course experience and her teaching aspirations. She wrote: "Cultural [*sic*] really needs to be talked about and included within the classroom. I love that it was done through invitations in these

classes. This is what I plan on doing for my culturally responsive lesson." A comment by Intern 21 further affirmed and problematized this connection:

> The invitations are something I have been thinking about in regards as to how to implement them within my own classroom. These were very effective in my own learning process and I feel they can be the same for my students. But my question is how do I adapt such activities for 1st and 2nd graders?

The interns were dealing with questions of transfer because they anticipated interactions in their elementary classrooms to be similar to their Block III experiences. They anticipated using literacy activities and conversations to raise student awareness of race and culture in much the same way they developed their own awareness through literacy experiences in Block III.

Expectations of discomfort. Given that the interns envisioned awareness work and conversations as the cornerstone of culturally responsive teaching, it was not surprising that they expected their engagement with culture and race in the classroom to be uncomfortable. Acknowledging and addressing the presence of culture and race in teaching is not necessarily an easy task. Many of the interns discussed the discomfort associated with considering these aspects in their teaching. Throughout their responses the interns described being "uncomfortable," feeling "awkward," not wanting to be the person to "say the wrong thing," and feeling out of their "comfort zone." However, while they openly acknowledged their own discomfort, the vast majority of interns still expressed a willingness to engage in the uncomfortable and challenging work of having courageous conversations with students. Intern 18 exemplified this position with her comment: "From our conversations in block iii [*sic*] I know that ignoring the issue or being worried b/c [*sic*] I'm uncomfortable with the issue will not help my students."

Intern 23 confirmed the importance of walking in the discomfort associated with their new commitments to address issues of race and culture in the classroom:

> And even though it is uncomfortable for me, 'cause I have zero background knowledge in any of it, I see the importance of it now. It's just becoming aware, and every time I talk about it I still think I'm going to feel uncomfortable about it but it's something I need to get over, and I need to experience that discomfort in my class. (Reflective conversation)

And her colleague, Intern 11, expressed a similar belief:

> Race and Whiteness have not always been issues that are within my comfort zone and still are not. However, from our many class discussions I have realized that not talking about these issues can cause far more damage than just bringing them out into the open. (Reflective freewrite)

The interns anticipated feelings of discomfort associated with confronting race, Whiteness, and "these issues" in the classroom, but they expressed a willingness to set aside their own comfort in their efforts to be culturally responsive – as they understood it – in the classroom.

Summary of the Findings

As the interns worked to make sense of the infused curriculum they encountered in Block III, they engaged in mindset work and application work. The mindset work focused on their encounters with Whiteness which was a relatively new and challenging concept for all of the interns. They responded to Whiteness in their coursework by using avoidance, explaining away, or making emerging acknowledgements. The interns avoided considerations of Whiteness by invoking silence, claiming unfamiliarity with the terminology associated with Whiteness, and returning to imagined depictions of diversity. They explained away Whiteness and its consequences by verbalizing dominant cultural narratives and using their personal and White experiences to view others' realities. But they also had moments of emerging acknowledgment where they resituated racism as

present and subtle, identified structural inequities in school funding and curricula, acknowledged and considered different perspectives, moved from a skeptical consideration of Whiteness to a declaration that it "absolutely" exists, and started noticing the cultural, linguistic, and racial undercurrents present and subverted in classrooms. Avoidance, explaining away, and emerging acknowledgments occurred throughout the course timeline and activities.

The interns also made meaningful connections between the course curriculum and their envisioned future-classroom practices. This application work took two forms. First, the interns revisited the teaching commitment to use children's lives as resources, a commitment that they held prior to Block III. As they encountered course material, they identified literacy-strategies and community-building plans that could help them actualize this teaching commitment in the classroom. Second, they generally voiced a new teaching commitment centered on having conversations about culture and race with students. They understood these courageous conversations as the primary means of enacting a culturally responsive pedagogy. As such, they had general visions of using literacy invitations and read-alouds to initiate discussions with students, in much the same manner as they experienced in the Block III course themselves. Though they discussed their own discomfort in having conversations with students, they simultaneously professed a willingness to experience discomfort in their future classrooms in order to be culturally responsive. These findings are discussed in light of previous research and implications for theory, practice, and research follow.

Discussion

The interns did distinct mindset and application work as they engaged with curricular activities in the course. This discussion first addresses the mindset and application findings independently then considers the relevancy of those findings together.

Mindset Findings

The findings point to two important considerations regarding the interns' encounters with Whiteness. First, naming Whiteness – although a challenging feat – was important because it made injustice visible. Second, resistance and growth happened simultaneously. The following paragraphs explore each of these considerations in greater depth.

Naming whiteness. When the interns encountered Whiteness in the course, they responded to it by avoiding it, explaining it away, or acknowledging it. The first two of these responses demonstrated an inability or unwillingness to name and identify Whiteness. However, the interns' emerging acknowledgments showed instances when they were willing and able to name Whiteness. The ability to name Whiteness was significant for the interns because it made visible injustices that had been previously unexamined. For example, when Intern 10 acknowledged racism as something present, subtle, and directly related to his teaching decisions, it became an injustice that he then had to decide how to address. For the other interns as well, naming Whiteness made problems in the world visible and left them to consider how to proceed in light of their new awareness. In the words of Freire (2000), "Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming" (p. 88).

Growth and resistance. Though it would seem logical for the interns to progress sequentially from an inability to name Whiteness to an ability to name it, this was not the case. In reality, their resistance of Whiteness appeared alongside their emerging acknowledgments. While most studies about multicultural education point to resistance as a challenge to overcome (Brown, 2004; Irvine, 1992; Landsman, 2011; Marx & Pennington, 2003), the findings from Block III invite us to reconsider the role of resistance in Whiteness investigations. White preservice teachers enter teaching programs with ingrained ideas about the world and how it works. They have a schema already in place, and for most preservice teachers that schema includes deeply embedded cultural assumptions of individualism and meritocracy among other things (Castro, 2010; Mueller & O'Connor, 2007; Weisman & Garza, 2002). However, when White preservice teachers encounter Whiteness theory, it causes what Piaget (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007) referred to as cognitive disequilibrium, or the ”out-of-balance” state that occurs when a person’s current ways of thinking do not work to solve a problem or understand a situation. Cognitive disequilibrium causes discomfort, and this discomfort motivates individuals to keep searching for solutions to the disequilibrium. Resistance is one means by which individuals seek solutions. The times that the interns avoided and explained away Whiteness offer examples of resistance. These instances indicate that the interns were not easily able to assimilate and accommodate Whiteness theory into their current schema because it did not align with their ways of thinking about or being in the world.

Whiteness theory, therefore, necessitated a reshuffling and reorganizing of existing schema. As Marx (2006) found, Whiteness theory was most effectively adopted when an individual turned a critical lens on their own beliefs, deconstructed them, and

begin to reconstruct them. Deconstructing beliefs is not an easy or immediate process as exemplified in the interns' avoidance of critically examining their own beliefs, deconstructing them, and then reconstructing them. Yet, as the interns' experiences indicated, resistance did not preclude cognitive restructuring.

In several instances during the Block III course, interns demonstrated that growth and resistance were interwoven. This was easiest to see in the case of Intern 10. He often carried a resistant attitude into the course activities. However, in the findings, his voice was present in all three categories: avoiding, explaining away, and emerging acknowledgments. We saw how he avoided Whiteness when he quickly shut down the conversation about institutional racism by dismissing the terminology. He explained away Whiteness by using his own experiences to dismiss others' realities. However, in the same invitation where he committed these acts, he also demonstrated emerging acknowledgment. He drew the cube and described his inability to see the full extent of people's realities. And a few days later, he contributed the thoughts about racism as something in which he found himself an unwitting participant. Throughout the course there were examples of interns naming new aspects of Whiteness in one instance and doing or saying something contradictory or resistant the next. This data offers us the opportunity to reframe resistance as an important component of the growth process. It indicates that preservice teachers are encountering new ideas and doing essential sense-making work to assuage the disequilibrium they are experiencing.

This discussion about mindset work introduced two new ideas related to the findings. First, the ability to name Whiteness was significant because it problematized injustices that had previously been unrecognizable. Second, resistance was an integral

part of the interns' growth process. In these ways, the interns had opportunities to grow in their awareness of racial injustice in Block III.

Application Findings

In their application work, the interns established theoretical commitments before recognizing the teaching aspirations needed to realize those commitments in practice. This speaks to their developmental positioning and their course experiences in the education program. The interns entered Block III already professing the theoretical commitment of making literacy learning relevant to their students, but they did not yet possess practical strategies for realizing this commitment (See Chapter 4). They had engaged in two semesters of educational coursework, but they had limited practical experiences in the classroom. They had not yet had significant opportunities to develop literacy teaching practices. However, as the interns read and participated in course activities during Block III, they identified simple literacy strategies (e.g., co-construct text with a family member) as well as community-building practices that supported the theoretical commitment they had developed prior to entering Block III.

Their commitments also preceded teaching aspirations when the interns committed to having conversations with students about race and culture. Almost all the interns wrote about their commitments to engage in "courageous conversations" (Singleton & Hays, 2008), but they simultaneously had very vague ideas about how they would do so. Several interns identified invitations and well-selected read-alouds as strategies for generating conversations, but they did not individually or collectively have strong visions of how they would enact conversations in the classroom. These examples demonstrate the ways the interns first developed their theoretical commitments to using

critical multicultural perspectives in their teaching. This in turn led the interns to begin identifying strategies for enacting these commitments in teaching but not well-designed plans for conducting these courageous conversations. In other words, the interns' willingness to perform preceded their competence for such teaching performance.

Even though the interns anticipated feeling uncomfortable initiating courageous conversations with their students, they still confirmed their desire to do so. Two independent ideas illuminate the interns' stance in this situation. First, Singleton and Hays's (2008) work on courageous conversations states that people should expect to experience discomfort when they engage in conversations about race. They explain: "Those who engage in conversations about race must admit that they do not know all they have claimed to know or honestly believed they knew" (p. 20). Thus, the teaching commitment to engage in conversations about race by nature did not position the interns to feel confident in their own knowledge or expertise. Any undertaking of courageous conversations about race would place the interns in the position to develop their competency by engaging in the activity itself. For the interns, the teaching process itself was yet unrealized. They had many ideas about what they would do in the classroom, but they had not yet been able to implement their visions. Vygotsky (1978) argued that performance could precede competence. Learning is an active process that does not have to wait for readiness (Vygotsky as cited in Woolfolk, 2007). Fortunately for the interns, this view of learning posits that it is not necessary to have a full mastery of a skill before using it.

The interns' commitments led their aspirations and their willingness to perform preceded their competence and confidence to do so. These two pedagogical trends offer

insight into the interns' development as future teachers and their preparedness for classroom teaching. However, most of the implications from the interns envisioned teaching applications are closely tied to their mindset work.

Connecting Mindset Work with Application

The interns developed three teaching commitments that emerged from the mindset work they did during Block III. Their commitments to make learning relevant, establish a classroom community, and have conversations with students about race show that grappling with critical multicultural concepts in the course pushed the interns' to be more critical and culturally responsive in their teaching commitments than they were at the beginning of the course, but it also shows they were not yet able to fully grasp literacy teaching as a critical and culturally responsive practice. In addition, their commitments reveal some of the shortcomings of the Block III curriculum.

Making learning relevant. Interrogations of Whiteness in the course pushed the interns to notice that children's identities are deeply connected with the languages, cultures, and races they carry with them into the classroom. In this way, the interns expanded their understanding that knowledge is a cultural construction (Vygotsky, 1978). They also aligned their teaching visions with culturally responsive teaching practices that hold affirming attitudes toward children from culturally different backgrounds, reject deficit perspectives, and see students' backgrounds as resources for learning (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). As the interns developed their commitment to make learning relevant to students' lives, they began to identify race as a force that influences student learning in the way that it shapes student and teacher actions and interactions in the classroom.

Establishing a classroom community. Interrogations of Whiteness in Block III also helped the interns generate a vision for teaching that values difference. They placed high value on creating classroom communities where differences would be welcomed and integrated into the learning environment. Culturally responsive teaching frameworks highlight the importance such community-building in creating equitable learning opportunities for all students. Cochran-Smith (2004) notes that significant work should occur within a community of learners. In addition, Woldkowski and Ginsberg (1995) include "establishing inclusion" as one of four vital components of culturally responsive teaching. They describe this inclusion as the teacher's ability to create a learning environment in which students and teachers feel respected by and connected to one another.

Having conversations about race. A third way the interns developed a culturally responsive vision of literacy teaching was in their commitment to have conversations about race and other "critical issues" with their students. Race is not a topic that is typically addressed with elementary students (Richert, et al., 2009), yet the interns' willingness to address race seemed to reflect the growing awareness of Whiteness and racial injustice they developed in Block III. Many seemed to feel compelled to carry the thinking and processing they began in Block III regarding the issue of race into their work with students. In fact, one of the readings for the course, "Preparing White Teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation" (Richert, et al., 2009), called for White educators to talk about race and racism with their students. Responding to their experiences, the interns envisioned engaging "literacies of race" (Dutro, Kazemi, & Balf,

2005) in the classroom, identifying conversations about race as an integral part of the their literacy teaching visions.

As the interns discussed courageous conversations, it became clear that such conversations incorporated aspects of critical literacy pedagogy, even though the interns had not intentially developed these elements. For instance, the choice to engage in these "courageous conversations" (Singleton & Hays, 2008) *disrupts the commonplace*. In addition, conversations about race *interrogate multiple perspectives* by contemplating many different sides of an issue. Lastly, considerations of race and privilege *focus on sociopolitical issues*. Without intentionally drawing from Lewison, Flint, and VanSluys' (2002) dimensions of critical literacy, the interns' decisions to have conversations about race with students incorporated a critical stance that touched upon three of the four dimensions highlighted in the authors' work.

Limited scope of interns' teaching visions. Although the interns made notable growth in Block III, they were just beginning to unsettle ways of being White in the world, and they were all at different points on the journey of investigating Whiteness based on their own experiences and backgrounds. Consequently, the interns' visions for literacy teaching reflected this new awareness. While their visions held more elements of critical stance and culturally responsive teaching than they had at the beginning of the course, these were aspects of their visions that were still being developed in relation to their growing awareness of Whiteness.

For instance, the interns' developing sense of literacy was more critical, but it still did not encompass all aspects of a critical literacy pedagogy. As Meyer and Manning (2007) explain, "Teachers committed to the Critical Literacy view welcome, include, and

embrace diversity and support students in becoming active within and upon their worlds" (p. 139). The interns envisioned literacy practices surrounding race that welcomed, included, and embraced diversity; but they had not yet imagined supporting students in being "active within and upon their worlds."

In addition, the interns developed theoretical visions and commitments for having conversations about race with students but they had yet to figure out how to enact such conversations in the classroom. Conducting conversations about race requires practical knowledge about "posing questions that encourage children to view issues from multiple perspectives, to interrogate their own and others' assumptions, and to think about how ideas about race construct us even as we question those ideas" (Dutro, et al., 2005, p. 104). The interns had the desire to converse with students about race, but Block III did not equip the interns with the practical knowledge for facilitating these conversations. Consequently, the interns only had vague and emerging notions of generating and supporting conversations through read-alouds and invitations.

Lastly, though the interns were becoming aware of Whiteness, they had relatively few opportunities to consider how their Whiteness would position them as teachers, particularly in relation to their students and the curriculum. The interns were still largely concerned with their own teaching behaviors rather than their students' contexts. In part, this reflects their position as teacher education *students*. The structure of the teacher education program placed them in college courses aimed at helping them learn how to teach. They did not spend the majority of their time in field placements, so the idea of student context was likely still quite abstract. However, Ladson-Billings (1995a) explains that effective culturally responsive teachers rely on cultural competence as a

vehicle for student learning. The interns still needed opportunities to develop cultural competence in context. In addition, the interns' visions of literacy teaching had yet to consider the influence of their own Whiteness on students' learning experiences. They were simply not yet at a juncture where they had been invited to reflect upon the influence of Whiteness on the classroom literacy curriculum or the teacher-student interactions in the classroom. This meant that even though the interns were becoming more aware of Whiteness, at this point, there were still particular aspects of unexamined Whiteness in their visions of literacy teaching.

Shortcomings of Block III. The interns' experience in Block III helped them see particular connections between Whiteness and literacy, but it may also have limited the degree to which they were able to develop as culturally responsive literacy teachers. To begin with, the instructors and I privileged the racial elements of Whiteness investigations over other foci. This was not necessarily an intentional decision, but upon reflection, it is evident that many of our curricular investigations highlighted this aspect.

In addition, as curriculum designers, we failed to adjust the standard Block III curriculum in order to explicitly address critical literacy practices during the course. In order for literacy instruction to reflect the principles of critical multiculturalism, it must be **critical.** Thus, we did the interns a great disservice by omitting explicit instruction about critical literacy practices and failing to expose them to Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys's (2002) summary of the four dimensions of critical literacy and Lewis, Enciso, and Moje's (2007) considerations of *identity, agency,* and *power*.

The connections the instructors and I made, or failed to make, between Whiteness and literacy also acted as a limiting factor in the interns' growth. In the Block III course,

Diane, Susan, and I addressed Whiteness; we addressed literacy; and we used literacy methods (e.g., invitations, readings, and discussions) to bring multicultural content in the course. However, we did not publicly explore with the interns the ways literacy teaching could work to counteract Whiteness in the classroom. In short, the instructors and I had multicultural knowledge, and we had knowledge about literacy teaching, but merging these largely individual bodies of knowledge in deep and meaningful ways to help the interns envision culturally responsive literacy teaching practices was challenging. As a result, the interns generated teaching commitments that showed some connections between Whiteness and literacy instruction but fell short of other important connections. This follows the finding of Marx and Pennington (2003) that interrogations of Whiteness can only begin wherever the instructors and preservice teachers are at the time. The interns could not envision greater connections between literacy and Whiteness than Diane, Susan, and I made visible and accessible to them.

Implications

The findings from this chapter suggest several implications for theory, teacher education, and research related to merging literacy methods and critical multicultural content.

Theory

Two main theoretical implications for integrating critical multiculturalism into teacher education coursework emerged from this chapter. First, this course experience provides evidence of the value of integrating critical multiculturalism – particularly investigations of Whiteness associated with the theory – into a methods course. Preservice teacher interns do make progress in understanding Whiteness when they have

repeated and different encounters with Whiteness-related content throughout a single course. Many of the interns in this study developed new visions of literacy teaching grounded in a growing awareness of racial injustice. Nevertheless, the interns were only beginning to imagine pedagogical practices that might unsettle Whiteness by the end of the course. Thus, it is clear – as other studies on Whiteness have indicated (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Marx, 2006; Sleeter, 2008) – that the interns would have benefitted from a progressive, cumulative infusion of Whiteness across their educational program. Integrating critical multiculturalism into *all* teacher education courses allows preservice teachers to have multiple and sustained encounters with Whiteness theory over time. Preservice teacher interns are more likely to experience varied learning activities, contexts, and content-area connections if teacher educators infuse Whiteness content systematically across an entire program. In this study, the literacy methods course provided some variations that appeared significant in the interns' experiences with Whiteness. If interns were exposed to Whiteness in mathematics and science methods courses as well, these variations would provide preservice teachers exponentially more possibilities for developing understandings of Whiteness and teaching practices for interrupting White dominance.

Second, the Whiteness theory encapsulated in critical multiculturalism needs to become more accessible to undergraduate students if we, as teacher educators, want to help them enact pedagogical practices that interrupt White dominance. Critical multiculturalism is rooted in critical pedagogy which has been critiqued for its inaccessibility (Huerta-Charles, 2007; Weiner, 2007). One of the criticisms of critical pedagogy is its terminology-laden nature. It has its own "jargon of the discourse" that

does not reach or attract a critical mass (Weiner, p. 59). For example, in one of the invitations, the term "institutional racism" locked the students out of having a meaningful conversation about Whiteness. It is important to consider how to make critical theories more accessible while maintaining the integrity of theoretical beliefs presented therein.

This study points to several possible avenues for making Whiteness theory more accessible (Weiner, 2007) to preservice teachers. Compiling a dictionary of terms for teaching faculty and preservice teachers for program-wide use is one way to ensure key terminology is defined and used with consistency.

Another way to improve accessibility is to accept that learning to recognize and confront Whiteness is a developmental process. Whiteness theory asserts that Whites should be actively identifying and resisting Whiteness (Maher & Tetreault, 1997), thus implying that anyone who has not yet reached this level of development is part of the problem. Unfortunately, this all-or-nothing perspective situates newcomers to Whiteness theory as inadequate and deficit. Such thinking is counter to Vygotsky's view of development, which Zebroski (1994) describes as a tidal wave: "In this metaphor, development is both progressive and regressive. However, when the movement is progressive, the wave becomes deeper and higher as it moves forward, exemplifying the cumulative effect of increased development" (Wink & Putney, 2002, p. 89).

Teacher education courses need to consider ways of introducing Whiteness that do not vilify White preservice teachers and instead assist them in examining Whiteness as they learn to act against it. One potential way this might be accomplished is by situating privilege as more relative than absolute. Gorski (2012) acknowledges that there are varying degrees of privilege even among Whites. He argues that poverty and class

mediate White privilege. Preservice teachers may be able to step into conversations about Whiteness by acknowledging places in life where they have noted their own relative privilege – that is, instances in life where they recognize that they have had more opportunities than someone else.

Another way to make Whiteness theory more accessible to preservice teachers is to consider it in conjunction with sociocultural theory. Chapter 4 described sociocultural theory as a generally accessible theory for the interns. Overlaying Whiteness theory onto Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory creates a space where critical elements of identity, power, and agency could be addressed in a manner that is more accessible to undergraduate students.

Practice

The findings from this chapter suggest that one implication for teacher education is the need to consider a more nuanced understanding of resistance. Resistance is often presented as the means by which preservice teachers avoid dealing with tough issues such as Whiteness and White privilege (Brown, 2004; Case & Hemmings, 2005; Irvine, 1992; Landsman, 2011). In racial identity work, it is situated as a self-protective strategy that individuals use to maintain or keep from examining racist attitudes and beliefs (G. R. Howard, 2006). However, it is important that teacher educators do not dismiss resistance as simply a failure to consider and accept new information. This chapter described instances where resistance was intricately connected with growth. As preservice teachers encountered information that challenged their schema, they resisted the new, unsettling information. However, their resistance did not preclude change. In spite of instances of resistance, the interns also arrived at new understandings, began considering information

in light of more recent experiences in diverse classrooms, and recognized that there are multiple perspectives for viewing the world. These findings suggest that resistance indicates a cognitive disequilibrium (Piaget as cited in Woolfolk, 2007) that preservice teachers must seek to balance. Though it is important to monitor resistance levels and work to minimize the amounts of resistance preservice teachers experience, resistance does not need to be eradicated or looked upon negatively. It may be a necessary part of the growth process.

Second, preservice teachers need time and repeated encounters with cultural content in order to consider the influence of Whiteness on classrooms and literacy teaching. The Block III course used a variety of methods to infuse Whiteness during the six weeks of class sessions. The repeated encounters were significant in providing different avenues for interns to connect with the content. For example, the findings showed Intern 10 demonstrating awareness in one scenario and resistance in another. The repeated encounters also gave interns additional time to consider Whiteness theory. Nearly a month passed between the time Intern 20 indicated her skepticism of Whiteness theory and the day she proclaimed that it absolutely exists. In addition, time and repeated encounters allowed the interns to make connections between the cultural content and their teaching commitments. They added literacy and community building strategies to a teaching commitment they had already established, and they developed a teaching commitment grounded in their growing awareness of racial injustice. Understandings did not have to be achieved during a single encounter; instead the content from one experience could inform the next.

Furthermore, repeated encounters with Whiteness over time should focus on both raising awareness of racial injustice and addressing pedagogical practices that counteract the effects of Whiteness in the classroom. Typically the impetus to infuse Whiteness interrogations into teacher education programs focuses on issues of awareness. However, this study demonstrates the limitations of this approach. Helping interns become aware of Whiteness was important work, but it only minimally helped them envision pedagogical practices that would enable them to deconstruct Whiteness in the classroom. Preservice teachers must be aware of the role of race in teaching, but they must also develop teaching practices that actively combat White dominance.

Teacher education programs should consider how materials and tasks can best support preservice teachers' developing awareness and teaching practices related to issues of identity, agency, and power in the curriculum. We need to help preservice teachers learn methods and strategies for eliciting out cultural competence that is geographically and historically relevant to the student populations with whom the preservice teachers will conduct their fieldwork. Furthermore, we must help preservice teachers connect cultural competence with teaching decisions. They need to know how information about their students can directly guide their content-area instruction in ways that validate their students and interrupt White dominance.

Maintaining a focus on awareness and pedagogical issues is important in individual methods courses, but it is also an important consideration across the sequence of courses in a teacher education program. We should work toward a course-by-course balance as well as a programmatic balance between developing awareness and teaching practices that consider Whiteness. The necessity of methods courses addressing

Whiteness from both an awareness perspective and a pedagogical perspective points to a fourth implication.

As teacher educators, we need to develop our competency for infusing Whiteness into methods courses. Teacher educators preparing for infusing Whiteness investigations into methods courses face a challenging call. We must be familiar enough with Whiteness, White racism, White identity development, and culturally responsive teaching practices so that they can do more good than harm (Marx & Pennington, 2003). In addition, we must understand how issues of Whiteness connect with content-specific teaching practices and become proficient at helping preservice teachers understand these connections and develop pedagogical practices that counteract the effects of Whiteness. The instructors in the study and I had a basic familiarity with Whiteness, White racism, White identity development, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Among the three of us, we also had many years of experience teaching literacy methods. However, we were just beginning to consider Whiteness in relation to literacy teaching as was evidenced by the interns' teaching commitments that focused largely on awareness and minimally on pedagogical practices.

Teacher educators in methods courses need more, varied, and better resources for combining Whiteness studies with content-area expertise, but such information is not readily accessible. In the course, it was evident that the work of relating Whiteness and literacy teaching involved merging two fields of knowledge that are typically treated separately – multicultural education and literacy education. As a field of study, the primary aim of multicultural education is "to create equal educational opportunities for students from diverse racial, ethnic, social-class, and cultural groups" (Banks and Banks,

1995, p. xi). As a field, literacy education also has its own aims and objectives. A traditional literacy program helps preservice teachers understand the processes by which children become literate, recognize stages of literacy development, and consider the role of fluency, phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension – as outlined by the National Reading Panel (2000) – in children's literacy development. Though understandings of literacy and literacy learning are often rooted in cultural elements (i.e., sociocultural theories of literacy learning, critical literacy, New Literacies, etc.), the theories generally develop from within the field of literacy education itself rather than being negotiated between the two fields. Furthermore, multicultural content is typically introduced in a separate multicultural foundation methods course (Sleeter, 2008), not integrated among other content-area courses.

This chapter suggests that multicultural education needs to inform content-area knowledge in order to create overlapping goals and objectives that are accessible to teacher educators. Not only must teacher educators understand how Whiteness influences teaching and learning in their field of knowledge, but they must also know how to design learning tasks that makes that knowledge accessible to preservice teachers.

Research

This chapter identified some of the experiences and learning that took place in a literacy methods course that was infused with investigations of Whiteness. Even though the course was situated in an urban education program, Whiteness had not been strategically addressed across the teacher education program. Thus, this chapter represents findings from a single-course infusion model rather than an infused course situated within a larger programmatic framework.

The single-course infusion model in this study points to the distinct challenges of developing both awareness and literacy pedagogical practices related to Whiteness simultaneously in a single methods course. Further research could elucidate the connections between developing awareness and pedagogical practices in single courses and across teacher education programs. Additionally, there is a need for research that explores the abilities of teacher educators to infuse Whiteness from an awareness and pedagogic perspective into their content-area instruction. Finally, further research is also needed to explore the design of learning tasks that introduce pedagogical practices that interrupt Whiteness in the classroom.

Many studies have proffered successful techniques for raising awareness using active learning techniques (see Brown, 2004; Florio-Ruane, 1994; Lawrence, 1997; Sleeter, 2008; Xu, 2000), and I would add invitations to that ongoing list. The interns frequently described the significance of invitations in raising their awareness of issues related to Whiteness and culture. While the list of techniques for raising awareness continues to grow, we know much less about the kinds of learning tasks that make visible the connections between content-area instruction and Whiteness. Future research might consider the degree to which particular learning tasks are able to make visible the connections between Whiteness and classroom pedagogy and explore how these ideas are taken up by preservice teachers. This particular study suggests looking more closely at the design of invitations in order to determine whether preservice teacher learning outcomes would deepen if the invitations were to focus on pedagogical practices, not simply awareness and personal identity development.

Summary

The findings from Block III indicated that the single-course infusion model allowed the interns to encounter Whiteness and consider some culturally responsive aspects of literacy instruction. While research about Block III revealed the ways the interns learned about and envisioned pedagogical practices, it could not reveal how the preservice teachers' would enact culturally responsive teaching in the classroom. The next chapter describes the way two interns envisioned and actualized literacy teaching in racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse classrooms during their student teaching placements following Block III.

CHAPTER SIX: LITERACY TEACHING

The previous chapter described the interns' experiences in the Block III course where they encountered a critical multicultural curriculum within their literacy methods course. It showed how the interns developed new literacy teaching commitments that were inspired by their course experience. However, the Block III course offered no way to determine whether the interns' commitments would impact their classroom teaching practices. Their ideas were merely theoretical visions of how they imagined race and literacy intersecting in their teaching practices, but they had not yet attempted to live out their commitments in the elementary classroom. In order to learn more about how the interns' enacted their Block III commitments in the classroom, I continued to follow four interns into their student teaching placements.

The objective of this chapter is to explore how the interns were able to actualize their visions of culturally responsive literacy teaching in the classroom. Because it was not possible to study all of the interns in their student teaching placements, I elected to focus my attention on four interns who – by the end of the Block III course – appeared committed to enacting culturally responsive teaching practices in their student teaching placements. I reviewed the interns' participation in course activities from the data collected and analyzed in Chapter 5. In addition, I collected and analyzed new forms of data from the focal interns' student teaching experiences. I conducted open-ended interviews with the mentor teachers and observed them teaching their literacy block one time before the interns assumed teaching responsibilities in order to situate the interns' student teaching contexts. In addition, the focal interns each participated in one open-ended interview at the beginning of their student teaching placement, three observations

of reading and/or writing instruction during student teaching, four bi-weekly (although sometimes more frequent depending on the intern) email correspondences during student teaching, and one focus group session with all four participants at the conclusion of their student teaching placement. Although four interns participated in the study during student teaching, this chapter only highlights and describes the experiences of two of these interns, Amanda[2] and Rebekah[3], who provide the most contrast.

Amanda and Rebekah had very different student teaching experiences. Though both were White females who demonstrated an increased awareness of Whiteness and expressed visions for culturally responsive literacy teaching based on their Block III experiences, they differed by three notable factors: age, geographic location, and disposition.

This chapter weaves together individual pieces of data to present a largely narrative account of each intern's experiences developing awareness in Block III and enacting teaching commitments in the classroom. The interns' stories each demonstrate the connections between the understandings Amanda and Rebekah developed in the course and their experience actualizing literacy instruction during student teaching. The chapter considers how Amanda's and Rebekah's experiences in Block III situated them to acknowledge race and be culturally responsive in their literacy instruction. Moving from their course experiences, each story then captures what happened during the interns' student teaching by considering the classroom environments and the influence of the mentor teacher, offering general comments about their experiences, and providing a narrative account of a literacy lesson for each intern. In this way, the stories reveal the

[2] Amanda is a pseudonym for Intern 11. It will be used throughout the remainder of this study.
[3] Rebekah is a pseudonym for Intern 20. It will be used throughout the remainder of this study.

interns' abilities to enact their versions of culturally responsive literacy instruction while simultaneously illuminating the supports and constraints they encountered in their specific contexts. A discussion of the interns' combined experiences and the resulting implications for theory, practice, and research follow the interns' individual stories.

The Case Study of Amanda

The first intern described in the chapter is Amanda. At the time of the study, Amanda was 20 years old and the youngest student in the class. She still lived in the rural community where she grew up about 30 minutes outside of the city. She was a responsible student, and though she spoke only occasionally in the large group discussions, her contributions often pushed the conversation to a new level.

Amanda's Block III Experience

Considering Amanda's Block III experience helps us understand how her growing awareness of Whiteness and teaching commitments situated her for literacy instruction during student teaching. It also reveals several of the reasons why she drew my attention as a researcher and made such an interesting case to follow into student teaching. Let us now take a closer, narrative look at Amanda's journey in Block III.

For the first two weeks of class, Amanda was quiet, but during the third week, she began speaking up in the large group setting. First, she participated in one of the large group conversations. In doing so, she revealed a surprising familiarity with and acceptance of Whiteness theory:

> Amanda: Did you guys read that huge article over white privilege last semester? We had one. Yeah, we had a huge article that talked about white privilege.
>
> Diane: Was it Peggy McIntosh? Was it Unpacking the…

> Amanda: Yes. It was. That was what it was…I just remember reading a big thing about it about how…sorry am I….
>
> Diane: No, you're fine…you were getting ready to say something.
>
> Amanda: I was going to say, it just talks about how we as white people have been so privileged. Obviously, it's called White privilege, but there are so many different things like, you know, the ISTEP tests are set forth for us. Curriculum just in general is. Read the history books. Ninety-nine percent of the content is filled with stuff about Caucasian people. (Large Group Conversation, 9/8/2010)

Not only was Amanda familiar with White privilege, but she also had the courage to cite examples of its existence in the large group setting rather than sit quietly on the sidelines or openly resist its implications, as many of her peers were doing at this point in the conversation.

Later that day, the interns were engaged in an informal, whole-class discussion about their experiences during their field placements. Many of the interns made observations about their classrooms or their mentor teachers, and a few of them spoke about some of the challenges they were facing in their work with individual students. Amanda, however, brought a very different contribution to the discussion. She shared a story from her field placement about her weekly reading work with a 4th grade girl who spoke Spanish at home but did not receive English as a New Language services at school. Amanda explained that her student did not "open up" to her at all during the first reading session. However, the last time Amanda went to the classroom she took several books. One was about tamales because Amanda thought something about the girl's culture might be "a good option" for her. When the girl looked at it, she "lit up" and got very excited. She started talking about making tamales over the weekend and about her aunt having a quinceañera party when she turned fifteen years old. Amanda remarked that her 4th grade

student "talked for like 20 minutes" when she had not spoken "nearly at all" the time before.

I thought this was a fairly insightful story for Amanda to share and besides jotting the story in my fieldnotes, I also added my own reflection: "Amanda seems to be making some personal 'ahas!'. I see the momentum pushing her in a direction that focuses on culturally responsive teaching" (8/30/10). Later, I realized that this story was not only important to me as a researcher, but it was also a very significant moment for Amanda. She recounted this experience three different times throughout the course: first in the whole-class discussion about field placements, second in the online forum, and third in the small-group conversation about the reflective freewrites. Each time her retelling varied slightly depending on her reason for recounting the experience, but in each account she described the way her focus student "opened up" when she connected with the text Amanda provided. Amanda caught my attention as a possible focal student for this study.

As I spent more time talking and listening to Amanda in several different contexts, I learned that the Block III course was giving her the opportunity to build upon bits and pieces that she had gathered from previous readings and conversations in Block I. As described earlier, Amanda entered Block III having already read and digested an article about White privilege. She had also already begun to consider the accuracy of the traditional curriculum. In her informal interview, Amanda described a conversation from Block I that raised her awareness of curricular inequities:

> I think the thing I thought was most interesting about it was when she started talking about the whole Thanksgiving issue and how we always celebrate that, but I'm actually…I have Native American. My granddad is actually half Native American. You don't ever hear the two sides of it. That's when it

> really got me thinking and just kind of frustrated, like having that correlation with me, actually having Native American in me and thinking about Thanksgiving, 'cause I had heard the other story some, but I just never was really thinking about it. Then in that class I was just kind of like, hmmm...

Amanda had made a personal connection to the impact of Whiteness. She entered Block III with some degree of awareness already established. She drew from and added to this awareness during Block III. To begin with, she described the way high stakes testing and curriculum favor Whites. She later considered the reality of "master scripting" (Blanchett, 2006) which proposes that curriculum is intentionally used to maintain current power relations. She concluded by saying, "I mean honestly how much is in our history books about African Americans?" (Large Group Conversation, 9/15/10). And in her reflective freewrite, Amanda wrote the following:

> I never realized how focused our curriculum is on the white culture, in more ways than one. For example, when we discuss Pearl Harbor we only focus on the horrible things that happened to our country that the Japanese did. However, we do not discuss at all the millions of innocent lives that were lost to the atom bomb or the Japanese Americans that were harshly judged and thrown into internment camps and looked upon as terrorists.

Not only was Amanda aware of the inequities of the curriculum, but she was naming concrete examples and connecting the curricular inequities that she noticed with Whiteness.

Given Amanda's level of awareness, I expected her to be an eager participant during invitations but found instead that – though she participated and engaged with the content – she did not demonstrate a strong shift in thinking as a result of her interactions with the content of the invitations. In her interview, she could barely remember the content of the invitations she had completed: "The only one I actually kind of remember is the one… it was a magazine and it had 12 different kids or something."

Even though invitations were not especially memorable for Amanda, she did describe the overall impact of the course in helping her develop a new outlook on the role of race in education. In her interview she explained:

> Whereas before I was like, oh I don't see color, it doesn't matter to me – and it doesn't, I'm never going to treat a child differently because they're African American – but you're aware of it. You're aware of when they're talking in their dialect, but you don't tell them not to use slang terms because it's not slang to them necessarily. It's just the way they talk and…I don't know, I just feel like I'm a lot more aware.

Amanda carried her awareness of race outside the classroom walls as well. She expressed how her new consciousness positioned her differently within her community of family and friends:

> It opens my eyes because my family, obviously, I don't want to say they're full-blown racist, but coming from a small town…they'll make remarks I've never thought about before…'cause I never noticed the small little remarks before, like ever…and it just changes the way that you think about things and think about the way you listen for things.

Amanda described her newfound ability to "think about things" and "listen for things" related to race. Block III prompted Amanda to become more aware of race in schools and society, and this growing awareness of race influenced the teaching commitments Amanda verbalized by the end of Block III.

Teaching Commitments

Amanda developed two clear teaching commitments in her reflective freewrite that she intended to implement during student teaching. First, Amanda expressed a commitment to use literacy-related activities to address curricular inequities:

> In my student teaching classroom and all of my future classrooms I hope to implement changes in this area [curriculum]. I want to take opportunities such as invitations, community building activities, etc. to talk about and build upon these ideas. I think it is very important to look at ideas from all perspectives, and I realize now that – even though I am white – I can, and my

> students can, grapple with these ideas. I think it is important to realize that there will be controversies between the students' thinking and beliefs – as well as my own; but if I have done my job at building a genuine community between myself and my students, I believe everyone will have an open mind and the ability to see through the immediate surface issues.

In her vision of literacy teaching, Amanda planned to change the content of what children in her classroom would see, experience, and discuss. She was ready to introduce materials and perspectives that were not typically part of the elementary school curriculum, and she intended to establish a classroom community that would allow her to do so.

Second, Amanda indicated a commitment to talk about race, culture, and difference with her students. She wrote:

> Race and whiteness have not always been issues that are within my comfort zone and still are not. However, from our many class discussions I have realized that not talking about these issues can cause far more damage than just bringing them into the open. We need to talk about these problems and work towards solutions….

Although Amanda recognized that it might be difficult and uncomfortable to talk about these issues with her students, she indicated a commitment to do so regardless of the personal discomfort she might experience.

Amanda's teaching commitments and the awareness of Whiteness and White privilege that she demonstrated in the course led me to select her as a participant during her student teaching placement.

Amanda's Student Teaching Experience

Amanda was placed in a traditional fourth grade classroom at Midwest Elementary School. Midwest was a familiar site since it was the location where the Block III course was conducted. Midwest was a large school with a diverse student

population (See Chapter 3). In order to situate Amanda's student teaching placement, I noted Amanda's comments about her placement in her emails and interview. I also interviewed her mentor teacher and conducted a single ninety-minute observation of his teaching during a reading block. Through these experiences I learned that Mr. Johnson was a teaching veteran with 15 years of experience. Twelve of those years were spent teaching fourth or fifth grade at Midwest Elementary School. He was the fourth grade team leader and spoke openly to me about his interest in teaching science and reading. He shared how the redistricting had changed his class composition and noted that the new students from a particular neighborhood tended to "call out" more.

Although African American students comprised only 40% of the school attendance, they were the majority in Mr. Johnson's class. In addition, the class had a majority of seventeen boys compared to ten girls. Amanda frequently used the word "authoritative" to describe Mr. Johnson. One of the most obvious features in the classroom was "Mr. Johnson's Rules for Life" which were posted across the cabinets in the back of the room. Although I did not count them, I would guess there were nearly 15 "rules for life" which included such statements as: Be respectful to everyone, you must complete your homework, and dream big.

The day I observed Mr. Johnson's reading block, he conducted a reading mini lesson and then introduced new literacy rotations to his students (See Appendix E). At the beginning of the mini lesson, all of the students were seated at their desks. Mr. Johnson was standing at the front of the room by the overhead projector. He announced that the day's mini lesson was about Author's Purpose. He briefly described the different purposes an author might have for writing a text. Then he turned on the overhead which

displayed a short passage of text. He read the text aloud and then called on a student to tell him the author's purpose. During the mini lesson, the students mostly had their heads on their desks. Though a few students raised their hands when Mr. Johnson asked about the author's purpose, most of the students appeared minimally engaged.

After the mini lesson, Mr. Johnson introduced the students to literacy rotations. These were a new component of his reading block, so he passed out a list of the six stations to the students. The stations included: independent reading with a daily reading log, a vocabulary activity, a computerized Accelerated Reader quiz, a social studies comprehension activity, partner reading, and reading with a teacher. Mr. Johnson spent several minutes describing each station and the rotation process, which allowed the students to choose any station from the list as long as they completed all of the assigned rotations by the end of the week. Then he allowed the students to leave their seats and choose their first station. Many students headed to the computers, and Mr. Johnson had to select students to move to a different station. A few minutes into the rotation about eight students were still wandering around the classroom.

With the exception of the students who chose to read to partners, the students were supposed to be working independently. However, the students at the vocabulary station were noisily discussing the task and negotiating access to the supplies they needed to complete the activity. Mr. Johnson went over to solve the problems at the vocabulary station. He then interrupted the rotation to remind all of the students to be quiet, use their time wisely, and stay at their station until the timer sounded. Just as the students finally seemed to be settling into their activities, the timer beeped. When a student complained that he "didn't finish," Mr. Johnson told him to move on anyway.

When I later interviewed Mr. Johnson, he talked about the literacy rotations by saying: "We were a little bit random earlier when you were here." In this way, he acknowledged the newness of the structure and let me know that the students had not yet settled into the routine of literacy rotations when I was there to observe. However, he also made a comment in his interview that made it sound like change was fairly typical in his class: "I did start one [writing unit] right away here but after the break I started another one." This comment combined with my observations gave me the sense that Mr. Johnson's structures might change frequently without allowing students adequate opportunities to adopt his new routines.

Nevertheless, Mr. Johnson did explain that the literacy rotation structure I had observed had become quite normal in his classroom. According to Mr. Johnson, he always introduced reading workshop with a mini lesson that lasted approximately ten minutes and then got the kids up and moving for literacy rotations which were intended to "focus in a little more on the exact skills they need to have." It is interesting to note Mr. Johnson's use of the word "skills" in his description because the literacy rotations I observed in his classroom were very skills-oriented. They were not built around meaningful engagement with texts and only pushed students to the knowledge and comprehension levels of Bloom's Taxonomy (as cited in Woolfolk, 2007).

In addition to learning about Mr. Johnson's reading instruction, I also discovered more about Mr. Johnson's attitudes and beliefs regarding teaching diverse learners. Though Mr. Johnson seemed to care about his students and expressed an interest in their lives outside of school, he alluded to two mindset issues that prove problematic in

culturally responsive teaching. First, Mr. Johnson was operating from a colorblind mentality. In his interview, he stated:

> I've heard another teacher complain that they have way too many African American children in their class. I've heard that. I don't even notice if I have a lot. Once they brought that up, I counted my kids. How many do I have? And I actually have more than she did. It's like I didn't even notice.

In an email correspondence with me, Amanda described the way Mr. Johnson's color-blind approach to teaching kept him from seeing his own discriminatory practices in student discipline.

> I feel he is a lot harder on the African American students. We do have a lot of competitive and aggressive personalities but they are not only with African American students. However, the White student who has these difficulties has been written up only once, whereas the African American students seem to be written up every single time.

In addition to this colorblind mentality, Mr. Johnson also viewed African American and special education students through a deficit lens. He did not highlight the positive attributes students brought to class, rather he described the way they needed to be "trained" to function correctly within the classroom: "They [Amanda and her teaching partner] were a little frustrated at the beginning but I said until we train the kids – because it is stuff they've never done before – they are going to struggle." And in a final statement to me during his interview, he talked about the challenges of working with "resource kids:"

> So that was a big eye opener for them, resource kids. Seeing what a handful they are. These kids are all over. Attention. Even though we had support in here, they were trying to teach and those kids were getting loud because they are talking to each other or to themselves.

In summary, Mr. Johnson was still developing a working knowledge of reading and writing workshops. He commanded obedience with his presence and demeanor but

did not establish a supportive learning environment where students had clear expectations and engaging literacy activities. In addition, I saw no evidence that Mr. Johnson had established a classroom community where children interacted in meaningful ways to accomplish academic objectives. Lastly, Mr. Johnson adhered to a colorblind approach to teaching and revealed a deficit lens for viewing his students.

General observations about Amanda's experience. Through my classroom observations, interview, email correspondences, and focus group session, I learned of three persistent challenges Amanda faced in her teaching. This section highlights the behavior-related challenges, instructional challenges, and planning constraints Amanda experienced during student teaching.

Throughout her teaching experience, Amanda perpetually struggled with behavior-related challenges. Though Mr. Johnson's classroom was a bit disorganized on my visit, he commanded adequate participation from students with his physical presence. However, as a twenty-year-old female, Amanda did not carry the same "authority" as her mentor. One of the first stories Amanda shared during the focus group session related the account of her and her female teaching partner's inability to stop a fight between the students at recess. She explained:

> We had a lot of fights. The first time they got in a fight with us [Amanda and her teaching partner] there – and it was just us – we were out at recess and they were literally strangling each other. We could not pry them apart...And we were freaking out. The second that we got them apart we just both lost it. I mean we were yelling and it was absolutely terrible. By the end of the day Katie and I were both just in tears and we were like we can't do this.

As Amanda's comment indicates, fights were an ongoing issue in Mr. Johnson's class, but fights were not the only challenge Amanda and her teaching partner faced. They also found that the classroom lacked a cohesive community structure. Mr. Johnson's

activities relied largely on independent activities, but Amanda and her teaching partner wanted the students to work together. Yet, when they introduced collaborative work, they found that the students had trouble cooperating. Amanda and her teaching partner had a community circle to try to intervene and create class agreements that would address the fighting and difficulties collaborating. She described the experience in an email to me:

> We asked students to raise their hands if they had ever been bullied, and then if they had ever bullied anyone. They then shared some of their stories and how it affected them. Students were truly [*sic*] engaged and into the conversation and they all contributed to our "class agreements."

While Amanda and her teaching partner recognized the need to build community in the classroom, they were only afforded community circle time once a week and did not have adequate time or support to create a class community where one did not previously exist. Though Amanda and her teaching partner generated class agreements, they still struggled with students who disrupted class and had trouble getting along. Eventually, Amanda and her teaching partner created a conference plan with the following steps: warning, conference, and then a hand written note to the parents. In doing so, they created a structure that provided them with enough "authority" to survive their days in the classroom, but they were never able to achieve the positive, productive community that they had envisioned.

After seeing Mr. Johnson's classroom, it came as little surprise that Amanda also encountered instructional challenges during student teaching. Though Mr. Johnson spoke confidently about reading and writing workshop, he was not employing them in the same way the interns envisioned them from Block III. In her interview, Amanda described some of her unmet expectations:

> Before school had even started when we would meet with our mentor teacher, he would talk about all these great ideas and these things that he was going to do.

Yet, Mr. Johnson was not necessarily enacting the ideas he discussed with Amanda and her teaching partner. He led Amanda and her partner to believe that he was using units of study in writing workshop (see Ray, 2006). If this were the case, the students would know about the immersion stage of writing workshop which involves exploring text and noticing features. But Amanda continued, "We come in and we're expecting them to be somewhat exposed to doing immersion and talking in groups. It was seriously the most stressful day of my life." Amanda and her teaching partner wanted the students to look at books together and talk in groups. It did not work because Mr. Johnson himself used didactic mini lessons, skill-based rotations, and emphasized individual student work when teaching. In the process, Amanda and her teaching partner discovered that:

> They [the students] wanted worksheets. So the next day we typed up this worksheet that basically just had what we told them to do on words in a worksheet. They did a lot better with that. So we've had to do that pretty much with everything that we do, type up something so they can see it and they want to feel it and they want to know what we want them to do and how long it's supposed to be.

Clearly, Mr. Johnson's students were conditioned to listen, complete worksheets, and work individually. While Amanda was learning about her students' needs, her comments also indicate the challenges she faced carrying ideas about teaching from the Block III course into her mentor's classroom.

Generally speaking, Mr. Johnson gave Amanda a great deal of freedom in lesson planning. She explained in an email correspondence that "it seemed as though he wanted everything to be done the same way it was before we were in the classroom." However, as she spent more time in the classroom, she realized that "when we finally decided to

come up with our own ideas and have them completely thought out and written down the way we thought they should go and why, we found that we were completely wrong in our previous assumption." Mr. Johnson allowed Amanda to integrate community circle into the weekly class schedule. In addition, he allowed her to use many racially-themed books during reading workshop such as *If She Only Knew Me, Trevor's Story,* and *Through My Eyes*.

At other times, though, he did limit Amanda's ability to try new things. She wanted to use literature circles with all of the students, and he would only allow her to do so with the highest reading group. He insisted that all of the other groups have guided reading with leveled texts from the reading program they used at the school, which Amanda found limiting. In addition, he selected *Maniac Magee* as the book the class would read together since he was familiar with the text and had used it in the past. Though Amanda found some of Mr. Johnson's requests limiting, on the whole she was able to bring in much of the content that she had desired to use as well.

Lesson observation. After Amanda settled into her new classroom and assumed the teaching responsibilities, I began observing her reading and writing workshop. The following lesson provides a glimpse into Amanda's instruction about a month into her student teaching placement. Although Amanda and her teaching partner had assumed full teaching responsibilities at this point in time, Mr. Johnson was still present in the classroom.

The students were still participating in the literacy rotations that I had observed when Mr. Johnson was teaching, but Amanda and her teaching partner had modified the structure and content slightly. They had inserted invitations and divided the children into

small groups who moved together from one location to the next – Mr. Johnson's model had allowed children to move wherever they wanted as long as they completed the correct number of rotations at each activity every week. The day I observed Amanda's literacy instruction, Mr. Johnson was working with small groups at the side of the classroom and Amanda's teaching partner had taken a small group of students to the library to work on an activity for the entire reading workshop period. Though I was present for nearly all of Amanda's reading and writing workshop on the day of her lesson, the part of her instruction I describe in this section occurred during the second of the three literacy rotations as Amanda was working with the students at the invitation rotation.

Amanda had stationed herself on the floor in the middle of the classroom with all of her invitation supplies. When the timer beeped, she sent her first group of students off to their next location and welcomed a new group. The group arrived with gusto. All of the students were African American. There were four boys and one girl. After the students seated themselves on the floor, Amanda started to describe the *Through My Eyes* invitation (See Appendix F) to the group. One of the boys, DeMarcus, immediately set the tone for the rotation by announcing that he thought they were supposed to get to do independent reading. He became quite huffy when he learned he was not going to get to read the book he wanted, and Amanda responded by introducing a different invitation entitled *Whoever You Are, Wherever You Are, However You Are* (See Appendix F). The new invitation included multiple books, so the students had some choice in their reading. Amanda showed the books to the students and told them to pick one to read independently for seven minutes. A couple of students picked books and began reading,

but DeMarcus refused to read any of the books. He continued to assert his position, and it became obvious that all of his noise was keeping others from getting into their texts. Finally, when he asked if he could read his magic book instead, Amanda agreed. He went back to his seat and got the book. At that point, the girl in the group put down her book and picked up the self-select book from her desk and continued reading that nearly the entire time.

Amanda seemed exhausted after this interchange. In my fieldnotes, I remarked that Amanda had been sick for almost two weeks. She had stayed home for a few hours that morning but had come to school for the afternoon activities. She coughed frequently when she spoke to the students and just seemed "really tired" during the literacy rotations.

At this point, though, some of the students appeared to begin reading. One child settled right in with a book called *If She Only Knew Me*. Another read *Trevor's Story* and appeared to read at first, but started flipping a bit when DeMarcus came back to the floor with his magic book. After a few minutes of reading time, Amanda tried to engage the students in conversations about the books they were reading. One student was reading a book called *Say Something*, but he was not able to tell her what was happening in the text so she moved onto another child. This child was reading *Trevor's Story*, and he offered an oversimplified explanation of the text. At that point, DeMarcus started flipping through the pages of *Say Something* and ripped out a page. The kids "ooohed" when they realized what DeMarcus had done. Amanda halted the conversation about *Trevor's Story*. She took the book from DeMarcus and told the other students it was not a big deal. As she was taking care of the ripped book, DeMarcus took another book and

moved to a different part of the classroom. She returned to the group, and told the other students that DeMarcus could read elsewhere and she was not going to get him.

Amanda then turned toward Jaron who was reading *If She Only Knew Me* (Gray & Thomas, 2005). He started talking about his book. When she asked the students if they knew what the books had in common, Jaron said, "I know. They're all books about race." Upon hearing this comment, the girl put down her own book and began listening to the conversation. Amanda then invited them to finish the invitation by drawing or writing about the book they had read. They all got supplies and started, but they barely had time to begin before it was time to move to their next rotation.

The students completed their third rotation – which was also plagued with behavior problems – and then moved into writing time. Amanda's students were writing slice-of-life stories, and she was giving them time to work while she and her partner conferred with students. Mr. Johnson circulated around the room reminding children to be quiet and stay on task which seemed to work to some extent. Although I watched Amanda confer, my attention was drawn to Jaron, the only engaged student from the invitation rotation I had observed. Instead of working on his slice of life story, he had pulled out his paper from the invitation and continued working on his product from *If She Only Knew Me.* He worked intently on his product for all of writing time. He continued working even after Amanda told the students that it was time to put away their writing for the day. As all of the other students were preparing their belongings to go home, Jaron hurriedly stapled a cover to the pages that he had written and handed the book to Amanda. I left shortly thereafter, but Amanda shared Jaron's book with me later (See Appendix G). The text read (as written):

Page 1: If she only knew me That I had to get up to get my little Brother to school That I would had never miss the Bus.

Page 2: If she only knew that I did not eat supper last night I would have never have to get extra Breakfeast at school Because that is how the school rules are.

Page 3: If she only knew That I could not go to sleep on Monday I would have gotting my homework done.

Page 4: If she only knew that I love to Draw She would have to pick me to Draw.

Page 5: If she only knew that I Love to play football she would have told us to sign up for football.

Page 6: If she only knew that I like to do math she would had never set in the corner.

Discussion of Amanda's lesson. In spite of many distractions, Jaron was able to read *If She Only Knew Me* during the invitation. The text touched him so powerfully that he continued his invitation response instead of doing his other classwork. This example speaks to the power of the content that Amanda had created. At the beginning of her student teaching placement, Amanda had expressed her desire to change the literacy curriculum to make it more equitable. She honored this commitment by creating and integrating invitations focused on race. Jaron's experience indicates that the content she developed was accessible to students. It was relevant to their lives and had the potential to help them make deep and meaningful connections; however, as a new teacher, given her context, she was unable to establish an "inclusive community" (Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) that made the type of learning she envisioned possible. Unfortunately, behavioral issues prevented most of the students from engaging with the curriculum that she had created. Amanda's lesson shows that she provided a curriculum that interrupted Whiteness, but as a young, new teacher her student teaching context greatly limited her

ability to make the curriculum accessible to her students and to fully enact her commitment to have conversations about race with her students.

The Case Study of Rebekah

At the time of this study, Rebekah was a 42 year-old suburban wife and mother. She was vocal and articulate in the large group discussions and at times, dominated the floor. An overachiever by nature, her work was very thorough, and she often exceeded requirements. From Block III to student teaching, Rebekah had a very different set of experiences than Amanda.

Rebekah's Block III Experience

Rebekah was on my radar before I had ever met her. Susan knew her from a previous course and mentioned that she might be a good intern to observe. She described Rebekah as articulate, thoughtful, and open to new ideas. She went on to explain that Rebekah had totally revised her ideas about teaching and learning during the Block I courses. However, when Rebekah first engaged in the large group conversations about Whiteness and education, I thought there was little chance I would be following her into student teaching. Rebekah was the intern who directly questioned the existence of Whiteness in the large group conversations. She raised questions about the intentionality of Whiteness and brought up the dominant narrative that poverty, regardless of race and ethnicity, was responsible for educational inequities.

Rebekah's public stance felt a bit confrontational regarding issues related to race. Her contributions to the group conversations were reflective, but also skeptical. During these early weeks, Rebekah was an enigma to me. She had a dominant and fearless public voice that resisted acknowledging the impact of Whiteness on education.

However, on a personal level, I found her very thoughtful and reflective about teaching and education. We frequently had sophisticated conversations on the outskirts of class time about observations from her field experiences and changes in her own beliefs about education. Despite the rapport I was building with Rebekah during class sessions, her resistance to Whiteness made me seriously doubt that our relationship would extend into her student teaching placement, but as the course progressed, she made surprising transformations in her thinking.

In Chapter 5, I described the role of invitations in Rebekah's transformation, but Rebekah also attributed changes in her belief to the readings and conversations from the course. She described how course readings and conversations pushed her toward a new view of others in an email exchange with me:

> If I had to pinpoint a time when I noticed I was seeing others through a different lens it would be after reading the articles, "Discarding the Deficit Model" [(Harry & Klinger, 2007)] and "Preparing White Teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation" [(Richert, et al., 2009)]. While I didn't agree with some of the language in the latter article, I learned so much about myself. In the former article I keep playing this quote in my mind, "As many scholars have observed, it's often difficult to tell whether the behavior is mostly troubling to school personnel or whether it reflects a troubled child" (p. 19). This can apply to race also. Do things trouble us therefore the child is troublesome? Is our perception what drives our instruction and how we teach and treat our students? Do we truly see others for who they are or do we see them for who we "think they are?" Are we willing to teach them in a way that reflects "who they are?"

The readings prompted Rebekah to ask deep and important questions about the way schools and teachers position students.

Rebekah was also recognizing that her own perspectives were changing as a result of the course. In another email correspondence she described some of the realizations that she had formed resulting from the course (bold font in original text):

> I used to think of myself as "color-blind" but have come to realize that seeing a person absent of their color is a failure to see "who" they really are. The conversations we've had in class have compelled me to be honest with myself and to reflect on my beliefs and why I believe them. **I don't know how to explain it but I think I really see others through a different lens than I used to**. The key for me was to *recognize things about myself* and once I did, to respond. Prior to our discussions in class, in an effort to "not be" racist, I convinced myself to ignore color. To be honest, I used to think it was silly to make such a big deal about race (as though it shouldn't matter at all) but have really come to appreciate the uniqueness that each person brings to this world because of their race and who they are in their entirety. I came to this realization after reading several articles about "whiteness" and culturally relevant pedagogy/culturally responsive teaching. I never gave race/color any thought when it came to selecting material and curriculum for my classroom until this semester. I was truly oblivious!

As a reflective and articulate individual, Rebekah's writing speaks of the transformation that she experienced during the Block III course.

She came into the course unfamiliar with the concepts of Whiteness and White privilege. By the end of the course, she had not only become more aware of inequity, but she also stood out as an individual who was committed to being a culturally responsive teacher. Perhaps the best words to summarize Rebekah's course experience come from Rebekah herself:

> I could go on and never fully explain how and why my perspective has changed. I think it's one of those things that is hard to put into words. Two things I'm certain of is [*sic*] that I view students differently and it happened this semester.

These changing perspectives led her to create culturally responsive goals for herself as a literacy teacher.

Teaching Commitments

Rebekah developed an overarching objective "to consciously work toward conversations and activities that are culturally diverse and allow for inclusion of all students." She recognized that culturally responsive teaching would not happen without

purposeful effort on her part. In her first interview, she explained, "I think I would have to intentionally focus on being culturally responsive." Through multiple pieces of evidence, Rebekah identified two means by which she would intentionally be culturally responsive in her literacy instruction.

One way that Rebekah discussed intentionality was in relation to material selection. "I've found myself becoming more intentional about the books I choose to purchase for my future classroom," she wrote in an email. "I am a firm believer that every student should get 'just right' instruction and materials in order to meet their unique needs. Culture, race, and ethnicity are contributing factors when it comes to selecting 'just right' material." Rebekah was very focused on text selection as a means to make her classroom culturally responsive.

Rebekah also discussed her commitment to get to know her students and to use that knowledge to guide her lesson planning. Rebekah recognized that it takes concerted effort to get to know students. She explained this commitment in the following manner:

> Our conversations in class have caused me to be intentional about learning more about the students in my classroom. I want to know more about their culture, race, ethnicity, etc., in order to know them better and to be able to respond to them better.

Rebekah described her intention to consciously work towards conversations and activities that are culturally responsive. She imagined that considering culture and race in text selection and planning instruction based on her knowledge of her students would help her achieve this objective during her student teaching placement.

Rebekah's Student Teaching Placement

Rebekah's student teaching assignment was in a multiage, first- and second-grade gifted and talented class at Oakridge Elementary, Midwest's sister school. The

classroom represented a fairly equal distribution of African American, White, and Hispanic students, including several ELLs. Rebekah had a kind and studious student teaching partner, and they both spoke highly of their mentor teacher.

I had the opportunity to visit Rebekah's class and speak with her mentor teacher, Ms. Lowe, before Rebekah began her full-time teaching responsibilities. The visit and interview with Ms. Lowe confirmed Rebekah's high opinion of her mentor. Having worked in the district for 10 years, Ms. Lowe was a veteran teacher. She held a Master's Degree in exceptional learners and made efforts to stay current on issues in education. In her interview she told me:

> I am just kind of a nerd by nature, and so I just like to stay current. Research is something I really love to do, and it is not unusual to find me reading research articles on the weekend for fun. I just have been able to – either through those efforts or through hosting student teachers – stay current.

It was evident that Ms. Lowe invested time and energy to develop expertise in her teaching practice.

Ms. Lowe's classroom was a vibrant place to be. She had placed children's art and writing purposefully throughout the room. The children moved seamlessly from activity to activity during rotations and appeared to have internalized the procedures for literacy rotations, reading workshop, and writing workshop. They knew how to work independently during reading and writing workshops. Ms. Lowe moved effortlessly from a strategy-based, reading mini lesson to guided reading groups and back to a concluding share session. The children had systems in place for the conflicts that inevitably arose and often were able to work out their problems independently. When students did approach Ms. Lowe for help, she always treated them kindly and gently, but placed the

responsibility back on them to solve their problem and reminded them of the academic tasks at hand.

Although Ms. Lowe seemed to be a very gentle and humble individual, she exuded confidence in planning her own curriculum and running a democratic classroom. She talked to me about developing learning experiences based on the individual interests, strengths, and needs of her students. She also discussed her efforts to get to know about students' lives outside of the classroom. She was very intentional in this quest and cited several examples of spending time getting to know students and their families and explained the way her interest correlated to their academic performance saying, "I think they work harder for me because they know I care about them."

While Ms. Lowe claimed little formal training in culturally responsive teaching, she naturally integrated many culturally responsive practices into her literacy instruction. She gave her students choices that allowed them "to build from and with" (Dyson, 2003) the educational and cultural resources they brought with them into the classroom. At one point during my visit she was working on a vocabulary activity with a small group of children. The class had elected to study reptiles for a project, so she had several reptile books with her at the table. She invited the children to choose a book that looked interesting to them. In the book, they needed to find a word that looked "new" to them and show it to her. There was no wrong answer, and the children were leading their own learning experiences.

As Ms. Lowe worked with the students, she tried to access children's prior knowledge and draw from their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In one case, a student picked out the word *important*. The student's first language was Spanish, so Ms.

Lowe asked him if he knew another word in Spanish for *importante*. The child responded that he did not, so Ms. Lowe switched her approach and asked, "Do you know what it means in English? What if your mom said…it's very important to clean your room?" Though Ms. Lowe knew little Spanish, she actively tried to help her students make connections between languages. She later told me that she originally taught in a global emergence school and consequently had gained a great appreciation for "how difficult English is as a language."

In working with another student, Ms. Lowe drew from the child's prior knowledge when helping her define the word *vibrate*. After talking about the word, she asked, "Have you ever walked across the bridge on the playground?" Ms. Lowe knew about the experiences of the students in her class and tried to use them to support their learning.

To summarize, Ms. Lowe devoted her personal time to learning more about her profession and her students. She seemed to have a great grasp of her students' individual life stories as well as their academic strengths and needs. Ms. Lowe had the uncanny ability to weave culturally responsive teaching practices into her literacy instruction simply because she cared about making learning relevant to students' lives and invested time and energy in developing her teaching practice. She was not overly political or concerned about counteracting systematic injustice with her teaching, but she was concerned about creating a classroom where each of her students felt known and supported in their personal and educational pursuits. With good reason, Rebekah was excited about student teaching in Ms. Lowe's classroom.

General observations about Rebekah's experience. Through my classroom observations, Rebekah's interview, our email correspondences, and the focus group session, I learned about three significant components of Rebekah's student teaching experience. This section describes the support Rebekah experienced from Ms. Lowe's established literacy structures, Rebekah's intentional addition of multicultural read alouds, and a read aloud session that was particularly significant for Rebekah.

Rebekah adopted the classroom literacy structures that Ms. Lowe had established. She maintained the reading and writing workshop format that Ms. Lowe used. Rebekah found the transition from the Block III course to Ms. Lowe's classroom relatively easy since Ms. Lowe's instruction mimicked many of the ideals she had learned about in class. Planning was a collaborative effort in Ms. Lowe's classroom. Rebekah planned whole-group mini lessons and small-group objectives for reading and writing workshop based on the skills that Ms. Lowe and her teaching partner felt were relevant for the students. She maintained the literacy rotations the children already had in place. She also continued using the same groups, texts, and strategy focus that Ms. Lowe set forth in her guided reading structure although Rebekah made adaptations to those areas based on the students' changing instructional needs. She conferred with individual students about their reading and writing activities, and closed both workshops with a gathering time to review and share what students learned that day.

Rebekah was actively working to learn about students and use that information to guide her instruction. She enjoyed talking with her students and found herself learning a lot about them through these conversations. She was intentional in considering this

information as she selected texts to read aloud to her students. She wrote about her efforts in an email correspondence with me:

> I have learned that some children love to dance (my focus child), others love to play video games, while still others enjoy reading. I learned about a Hispanic student who loves to play football and is "pretty good" at it, according to him and the mentor teacher. While these are small things, they are important. Another African American student is being raised by a single mother with no siblings, while another student is Jehovah's Witness and doesn't celebrate holidays. I've been intentional about selecting materials with regard to these students. I read through every book I select for a read-aloud to ensure there is nothing in the books that would cause these students to feel excluded in any way!

As I observed Rebekah in class, I saw her intentionality in the matter of text selection for read alouds. In the past, Rebekah described how her mentor read books "like *Frog and Toad*, and little books like that," so it was evident that she was intentionally choosing different books to use with her students during read aloud. However, as I spent extended time observing Rebekah, it became evident to me that her focus on culture influenced her read aloud selection not necessarily the books she utilized with guided reading groups. She used the multiple-copy books available in the classroom which had been selected for readability purposes rather than multicultural content. Culture did not seem to be a driving force in text selection for writing workshop, but student interest was a major consideration for Rebekah. These instances indicate that Rebekah was making intentional decisions about using texts with her students. At times, this involved cultural considerations or student interests while in some cases it meant leaving texts unaltered.

Even though her inclusion of culturally relevant texts was limited to read alouds, Rebekah had a particularly significant experience during one of these read alouds. She could not wait to share the story with me one day when I arrived for an observation. She told me about reading a story with Spanish words in it for read aloud. Pedro, a typically

quiet student, kept raising his hand to share the meanings of the words, so she had him sit by her and called on him a lot. She remarked on how eager he was. Since then, she had observed that he had been giving her lots of hugs in the hall and talking noticeably more in class. Rebekah was markedly impacted by Pedro's response. She talked about it two other times as well – once in her closing interview with me and also in a focus group I conducted with several student teachers. This is how she recounted the story in the focus group session:

> I read a book and it had a lot of Spanish in it for a read aloud and he kept jumping up wanting to help me read the words. Cause some of the words I knew how to read, but I pretended I really didn't know how and you could see him, 'oh, oh…' and he'd look and he'd read it and he'd tell me what it was and then he'd go sit back down and then he kept popping up, popping up, and finally I was like, 'why don't you just sit right here?' and I felt bad cause I know some other students could have helped me, but he was just…he's never…he's usually kind of…more mellow and kind of doesn't really engage…

When she talked about the significance of this experience she explained:

> It built relationship and that's one thing I noticed in our group. And they learned a little bit more about each other and they felt more comfortable with me is what I noticed. It's like I became a more of a real person than this teacher, kind of like untouchable. Pedro would come and hug me all the time and a couple of other kids would try to tell me a Spanish word or whatever....You know, so it kind of built that just…for future. You know what I'm saying? Let's say those conversations did come up later or you know you kind of infused that kind of stuff, what I noticed is that it set the groundwork for me to be able to talk about more serious issues or get to know my kids so they feel more comfortable talking with me.

Even though I was not in the classroom to observe the interactions, it is clear that Rebekah's read aloud experience was a particularly significant moment for her as a teacher. She told the story several times and reflected on how this experience changed her positioning in the classroom as well as her relationship with at least one of her students.

Lesson Observation. The lesson I observed in Rebekah's class occurred about a month into her student teaching placement. Rebekah and her teaching partner had assumed full responsibility for classroom instruction, but on the day of my visit Ms. Lowe and Rebekah's teaching partner were attending a meeting at another school. Although a substitute teacher was in the classroom, Rebekah was responsible for the instruction. Rebekah had gathered all of the students on the floor in the meeting space at the side of the classroom for a mini lesson. The space was cozy and well-defined. Rebekah's chair and the easel sat in front of the gathering space. The classroom wall ran along one side, a row of low bookshelves lined the back, and the students' desks closed in the final side creating a small, but adequate rectangular area for whole-group instruction. At the beginning of the lesson, Rebekah was sitting in her chair next to the easel holding up the book *Tar Beach* for the children to see. She explained that *Tar Beach* was a story about imagination. She reminded the students that when they read books, they should always be making predictions, always thinking what might come next.

Rebekah then stated their objective for reading workshop that day: "Today, we are going to work on retelling." She explained that it is important to "create images in your mind" when you retell a story. She went on to remind the students that creating images is something that good readers do. Rebekah then flipped the chart paper to a new page where she had created a retelling chart to accompany the lesson (Figure 4).

Figure 4

Retelling Chart

Tar Beach
Who:
What:
Where:
When:
Why:

The students started getting a bit fidgety as Rebekah told them that these words would help them retell the story. She responded by saying, "All eyes on me so I know you're listening and learning." She began reading *Tar Beach* to the children. As she was reading, a little boy sitting near her feet interrupted with a comment. She listened to his remark, acknowledged his connection with the text, and then continued reading. Within the first few pages, he had interrupted Rebekah several times, and she finally asked him to please keep all of his comments to himself until they had finished reading the story. With the student quiet, Rebekah began to comment on the pages as she read. She noted aloud that the Dad in the story was a construction worker. One of the pages had a cat, and she asked the students if any of them had cats at home. After the children started talking simultaneously about their cats and other pets, she redirected the conversation to the book and began reading again. At the conclusion of the story, Rebekah showed the students the picture of Faith Ringgold, the African American author of the book. She reminded them that the author wrote the book. She also shared that she thought Faith Ringgold was really pretty and held her picture up asking the students, "See, isn't she pretty?"

Closing the book, Rebekah directed the students to the words on the easel. She asked them who was in the story. Several children raised their hands and contributed to the collective answer as they named the members of the family present in the story. Rebekah pointed out the characters in the pictures as the children responded. She next asked the students to name "the what." A child responded, "Tar Beach." Instead of writing the answer on the paper, she asked the children to talk as partners about "the where and what" from the story. After a few minutes of discussion, Rebekah collected answers from the students and jotted them on the chart paper.

She then asked when the story happened. It was a fairly straightforward answer, and she called on a child who responded correctly. Rebekah praised the correct response and moved onto why. Rebekah allowed several children to present their ideas. The final child to share said that it was because the little girl wanted to own the bridge. Rebekah celebrated this response. She talked to the students about what a deep and powerful reason that was. This comment drew a close to the mini lesson segment of reader's workshop. Before the students headed off to do their independent reading, Rebekah reminded them to practice retelling during independent reading. They were supposed to think about "the who, what, where, when, and why" of their books. She reminded them that, "Why can be hard. If you think about it, you can talk to me or talk to a neighbor." She dismissed the students from the floor a few at a time, and they quietly retrieved their independent reading books and moved to their self-selected reading spots around the room.

Discussion of Rebekah's Lesson. Rebekah's mini lesson reveals a great deal about her experiences enacting culturally responsive teaching practices in her context.

To begin with, we see that her student teaching context supported her lesson in two distinct ways. First, it provided her with literacy structures that supported student learning. During the lesson, Rebekah chose to focus on a reading strategy which reflected her adherence to the established literacy practices in Ms. Lowe's classroom. Indeed, Rebekah did not make dramatic changes to the literacy structures her mentor had established. She assumed teaching responsibilities, but she left the content of the literacy activities largely intact (i.e., literacy rotations, guided reading, mini lessons, etc.). The literacy structures in Ms. Lowe's classroom supported Rebekah's literacy teaching.

In addition, Ms. Lowe had also developed a functional learning community which benefitted Rebekah during her lesson. When the student made continual interruptions at the beginning of the story, Rebekah politely asked him to keep his comments until later, which he did. His minor behavioral distractions did not prevent the other students from hearing the story or participating in the discussion. Additionally, the students knew how to turn and talk to one another when Rebekah asked them to talk about the story on several occasions. The students worked together easily and benefitted from time to talk about the story. Rebekah's final comment instructing students to talk to her or a neighbor about "the why" from their independent reading books also recognizes that learning occurs within a community of learners and acknowledges student agency. Rebekah was beginning to realize that letting students help one another – rather than relying solely on the teacher – gave them power to act strategically in order to accomplish their goals (Johnston, 2004).

Text selection was one area where Rebekah did make changes. Even though Rebekah aimed to accomplish the same type of literacy-based objective as her mentor,

she used a different type of text to accomplish her goals. Instead of using a cute little book "like *Frog and Toad*," Rebekah chose the book *Tar Beach* by Faith Ringgold. *Tar Beach* is the imaginary adventure of a young African American girl who flies over Harlem during the Great Depression. As she looks down on the buildings and landmarks below, she expresses the sense of liberation that she experiences through flying and empowerment by making her own claim on the structures she sees. The text is filled with emancipatory images and themes. According to a *Horn Book* review (as cited in "Tar Beach by Faith Ringgold," n.d.), *Tar Beach* is a tale that "sparkles with symbolic and historical references central to African American culture."

Though Rebekah mainly used *Tar Beach* to introduce a reading strategy to the students, her selection and use of text *Tar Beach* was significant because it also demonstrated her effort to validate children's cultural and life experiences. Rebekah intentionally selected *Tar Beach* because she felt it represented the children in her class. The African American children in Rebekah's class saw characters in a story that looked like them. She even pointed out the author and described her as beautiful, a further effort to validate her African American students. Rebekah also seemed to know that it was important to honor children's lives and tried to help the students make personal connections with the story by talking about the dad's construction job and the cat.

Though Rebekah tried to incorporate talk about the text, most of the talk in the lesson focused on generating answers for the retelling chart. Rebekah seemed limited by how texts were typically used in her student teaching classroom. She used the text mainly to focus on a reading strategy rather than as a tool to initiate courageous conversations. In this way, Rebekah's enacted version of culturally responsive literacy

was relatively safe. It supported her work within the bounds of the literacy structures Ms. Lowe had established in her classroom, but it did not push students to consider issues of justice and equality.

Overall, Rebekah's teaching was supported by the literacy structures and classroom community that Ms. Lowe had already established. Rebekah felt empowered to introduce a multicultural text with emancipatory themes in her mini lesson. Rebekah honored her commitment to incorporate culturally responsive texts and to connect learning with children's lives, but she did not generate courageous conversations with students or enact grand-scale changes in the content or structure of Ms. Lowe's literacy classroom.

Discussion

Amanda and Rebekah both had significant experiences in Block III that positioned them to enact teaching commitments from the course during their student teaching placements. However, their course journeys revealed that their awareness of Whiteness varied greatly. Amanda was building on previous experience whereas Rebekah was processing a completely new idea. Though both acknowledged Whiteness in society by the end of Block III, Amanda's understandings were more established. Her awareness influenced her teaching commitments to change the curriculum and focus on conversations about race. Rebekah anticipated having conversations with students, but her commitments were more focused on integrating texts that were more culturally connected to students' lives.

Both Amanda and Rebekah enacted their visions to some extent. In Amanda's class, the structures and pedagogical style Mr. Johnson used did not offer her much

support in actualizing her teaching commitments. Though Mr. Johnson gave her a great deal of freedom to make changes to the curriculum, he had not established a positive classroom community where meaningful learning encounters could occur. Consequently, Amanda had introduced meaningful content, but she constantly battled classroom management issues that prevented students from accessing it.

Rebekah, on the other hand, entered a positive classroom community. Her mentor's structures largely supported her literacy teaching. But because the classroom was already functioning so well and Ms. Lowe stayed active in lesson planning, Rebekah had little need to create her own curriculum. Instead, she used and modified the literacy structures and activities that Ms. Lowe already had in place. Thus, even though she integrated a multicultural text with emancipatory themes, she followed the model of her mentor teacher by opting to use the text to develop a reading strategy rather than generating a conversation about the equity issues raised in the text with her students. Nevertheless, Rebekah's intentionality in selecting and using *Tar Beach* as a read aloud was a significant and bold step forward for Rebekah who extended her efforts to be culturally responsive beyond the pattern of her mentor teacher in this particular area.

Although Amanda and Rebekah had very different teaching experiences, their stories together illustrate three meaningful connections to the Block III coursework. First, Amanda and Rebekah enacted many of the literacy structures and methods they had learned about and envisioned during Block III. Rebekah read aloud to students during her reading mini lesson. She delivered instruction to small groups of children using guided reading groups and a teacher-led vocabulary center, group learning structures previously created by her mentor. She engaged students in individual conferences that

allowed her to listen to students read and write and offer suggestions for improvement. Both Rebekah and Amanda created writing workshops that incorporated "units of study" (Calkins, 2006; Ray, 2006). Rebekah's first and second grade class did a punctuation study and how-to writing unit and Amanda's fourth grade students wrote slice-of-life (Ray, 2006) stories. Like Rebekah, Amanda also used small group structures (e.g., guided reading groups and literacy invitations) and individual student conferences in her instruction.

Amanda's and Rebekah's enactment of sociocultural learning theories (Smith, Teemant, & Pinnegar, 2004; Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978) demonstrates a second connection to their Block III coursework. Amanda and Rebekah very clearly acted on the ideas that learning is social and teaching is assisting and incorporated some sense that knowledge is cultural and performance is situative (Smith, Teemant, and Pinnegar, 2004, Vygotsky, 1978). In both classrooms, the interns envisioned learning as a social endeavor. During her mini lesson, Rebekah invited students to turn and talk with one another during the lesson and allowed them to do so during the independent reading time following the lesson as well. The established classroom community supported the social nature of the learning activities Rebekah used with her students. Amanda also provided students many opportunities to learn in social settings, but her students were less able to do so because her mentor had placed such high value on independent learning. As a result, Amanda implemented classroom community-building activities, an intentional step toward creating a collaborative and productive learning community that was – unfortunately – not fully realized during her short time of student teaching.

Rebekah and Amanda also enacted the sociocultural learning principle of teaching as assisting (Vygotsky, 1978). Although the interns experienced varying degrees of success in their different contexts, both Amanda and Rebekah treated teaching as facilitating. They guided and led students to understandings about literacy using models of teaching that highly valued and relied on student input. As Amanda worked with students during the invitation, she prompted them with questions and tried to help them see connections between texts by asking them to find commonalities. Rebekah invited students to contribute understandings of the *Tar Beach* text so that together, she and the students, co-constructed a chart identifying the strategy and summarizing the story.

The texts Amanda and Rebekah used with students indicated their emerging awareness of knowledge as cultural (Vygotsky, 1978). Rebekah and Amanda were both intentional about selecting texts that reflected student culture and interests. In addition, Amanda seemed able to grasp that the construction of new knowledge was also a cultural undertaking in the ways she tried to make the curriculum accessible to her students. She also seemed to have an understanding that performance is situative as she described several instances where the school context mediated students' abilities to learn and perform, although both Amanda and Rebekah provided students multiple contexts for learning and provided learning experiences that led student development.

A third way Amanda and Rebekah demonstrated a connection to the coursework was in their emerging efforts to attend to the issues of identity, agency, and power foundational to critical theory and research (Lewis, Moje, Enciso, 2007). During my observations, I saw them beginning to demonstrate an awareness of these elements in their teaching, although they were clearly just beginning along this path. They showed a

growing awareness of the importance of student identity development by selecting texts that affirmed their students' racial, cultural, and linguistic identities; exposed inequities; and depicted agency – characters in the texts acting on the world to change and shape it. They also worked to build student identity through community-building. Although it was not evident to me that Rebekah and Amanda were considering the influence of their own power and position on the development of student identity, they were clearly focused on helping their students construct positive self-identities. Amanda's and Rebekah's lessons showed their efforts to begin attending to issues of power, identity, and agency in their text selection and teaching. Thus, the mindset work they did in Block III seemed to help them take a step toward addressing these critical elements even if they were not yet fully committed, or even aware of, all of the theoretical aspects of their undertaking.

Implications

Amanda's and Rebekah's teaching experiences point to several implications for theory, practice, and research.

Theory

This chapter continued to reveal the relevance of sociocultural theory in supporting intern's efforts to be culturally responsive in their teaching. Amanda and Rebekah both relied heavily on elements of sociocultural theory in their literacy instruction, even though some aspects were more developed than others. Teacher education programs can help beginning teachers develop fundamental culturally responsive practices by introducing them to sociocultural theories of learning (Smith, Teemant, & Pinnegar, 2004; Tracey & Morrow, 2006; Vygotsky, 1978) in conjunction with other instruction focused on culture and critical pedagogy.

Student teachers would benefit from greater access to Whiteness theory and principles critical multiculturalism than provided in a single course. Amanda and Rebekah implemented teaching practices based on limited exposure to critical multiculturalism. Although the exposure did impact their instructional decisions, the full scope of critical multiculturalism was not yet realized in their teaching experiences. However, as an additional note, it was apparent that Amanda's previous experience learning about Whiteness situated her to incorporate more critical content and to more intentionally trouble the construct of race than Rebekah. This suggests that greater exposure to Whiteness theory and principles of critical multiculturalism over time does support preservice teachers' efforts to incorporate teaching practices that interrupt White dominance.

Practice

The findings from this chapter suggest that preservice teacher interns need support making their literacy practices critical. Rebekah and Amanda both brought new content to the literacy curriculum that had the potential to expose issues of identity, agency, and power. However, neither intern used the material with students in a particularly critical manner. Explicit instruction in critical literacy might have supported Amanda's and Rebekah's efforts to incorporate multicultural texts into their literacy curriculum. Knowing the dimensions of critical literacy would have permitted them to name and develop their teaching actions (e.g., Amanda could have recognized that her books incorporated multiple viewpoints and created a way for students to compare and contrast those perspectives). In addition, it would have allowed them to reflect on their teaching to see what dimensions of critical literacy were missing (i.e., *taking action and*

promoting social justice). They would have benefitted from being able to name the dimensions of critical literacy and evaluate texts for issues of identity, agency, and power. Making the dimensions of critical literacy an explicit component of the undergraduate literacy curriculum and considering issues of identity, agency, and power consistently throughout a teacher education program would support preservice teacher interns in their transitions to classroom instruction.

A second implication suggested by the findings is the need for teacher education programs to continue working to place preservice teacher interns in classrooms that can support their development as culturally responsive teachers. Universities face a clear challenge in placing student teachers. Amanda's and Rebekah's student teaching experiences show that more knowledgeable others could have offered great them great support in becoming transformationist teachers. They were prepared to move forward with culturally responsive teaching practices but had only vague notions of how to do so and found that their mentor teachers did not have the expertise to help them grow in this particular area. Unfortunately, there is a paucity of transformationist teachers in today's schools making it unlikely for most student teachers to have a mentor teacher who is social-justice oriented with an extensive knowledge of culturally responsive teaching practices. Even exceptional teachers like Ms. Lowe do not always recognize the way their teaching may unwittingly replicate social inequalities.

Yet, teacher education programs must make transformationist classrooms and curricula accessible to preservice teachers if we hope to see preservice teacher interns grow in their commitments and abilities to become culturally responsive. The first priority then is identifying transformationist teachers in practice and gaining access to

their classrooms and their personal expertise. Obviously, it would be wonderful to place all preservice teachers in those classrooms for student teaching or field experiences, but it is unrealistic to expect an adequate number of transformationist teachers to meet the student teaching demand.

Fortunately, the use of technology affords great opportunities in this area. Showing and discussing video recordings of transformationist teachers in action offers one possibility for giving student teachers access to their classrooms. A Skype session, instant message discussion, or online forum with a transformationist teacher would also give preservice teachers a venue for discussing questions and ideas with teachers who are actively working to enact the transformationist ideals they are learning about in class.

In addition, we, as teacher educators, should model transformationist teaching practices in college classrooms. It was evident that the interns adopted many of their visions for teaching from their course experiences. We can capitalize on this connection between experience and idealized action by modeling transformationist teaching techniques in the college classroom *and* being explicit about what we are doing and why.

As preservice teachers complete student teaching, they also need greater support from the university as they navigate the challenges of being culturally responsive teachers. Amanda and Rebekah became student teachers who carried new understandings and visions from teaching into very different classroom settings. Amanda had the freedom to implement many new ideas, but her mentor's dispositions and teaching style negatively impacted her ability to successfully introduce new curriculum to the students. Rebekah's mentor greatly supported her literacy teaching, but she could not help Rebekah make further progress toward a social-justice oriented teaching stance

because that was not her own motivation. Though the interns had a kind and knowledgeable university coach, she did not invite them to reflect on the influence of Whiteness in their classrooms or even on the cultural aspects of their teaching in general. The stories from both Amanda and Rebekah show opportunities for greater success implementing culturally responsive literacy practices in their classrooms if additional support had been available.

Two possibilities for supporting student teachers seem most relevant and manageable.

Engaging student teachers in guided reflection about the racial and cultural influences in the classroom is one possible avenue for supporting their efforts to implement teaching practices that interrupt White dominance. Keeping this element of teaching present in their reflective thinking during student teaching shows preservice teachers that it is a valuable aspect of teaching, even if it is not their mentor's focus, and it reminds them to be cognizant of culture and race in their day-to-day teaching interactions. In order for this to occur, student teachers must have some tool for reflecting during student teaching such as a journal with prompts or reflective writing assignments. In addition, the individuals who supervise student teachers in their placements must also be knowledgeable about Whiteness, White privilege, and culturally responsive teaching.

A second avenue for supporting novice teachers is providing them affirmation for the steps they are making toward social-justice oriented teaching. Because most student teachers are not likely to have transformationist teachers for mentors, it is important for university coaches and instructors to affirm their beginning efforts to be culturally

responsive. Amanda faced many challenges during student teaching and could easily have become discouraged in her setting. She could have felt that her effort amounted to naught. However, a supportive voice could easily point to her successes in curriculum design and help her see the possibility of establishing a classroom community in her future classroom that could support her work. An affirmative voice for Rebekah could have celebrated her choice to integrate texts in read aloud and invited her to take another step by having conversations about the text with students or attending to culture in text selection for other literacy activities.

Research

This chapter described the literacy teaching practices of two interns who were developing an awareness of Whiteness and its influence on society. It enabled us to see some of the teaching practices enacted by these two preservice teachers following encounters with Whiteness. Both interns incorporated new texts into the literacy curriculum. Amanda even attempted to design conversations and activities aimed at investigating racial equity issues, although her intentions were not fully realized in practice. While it was clear that their growing awareness influenced their literacy instruction, these two cases alone do not provide enough data to help us know how teaching actions correspond to awareness of Whiteness and commitments to teaching for social justice. Future research should consider how teachers' consciousness shapes their instructional practices. Looking at teachers and their developing awareness of Whiteness on a grander scale could help educational researchers develop a step chart outlining teaching actions that progress from unawareness of Whiteness to full awareness accompanied by transformationist teaching commitments.

Conclusion

Rebekah and Amanda were two preservice teachers beginning their journey toward becoming transformationist teachers. Looking at their classroom experiences, it is easy to see how they were making efforts to be culturally responsive in their teaching. Although Amanda and Rebekah had dramatically different student teaching experiences and varying degrees of mentor support, it was evident that both interns were aware of the role of culture in teaching and were beginning to consider its influence as they made teaching decisions. The next chapter considers what Amanda's and Rebekah's stories can teach us as we consider them in relation to the other findings from the study.

CHAPTER SEVEN: CONCLUSION

Within this study, I have shown how a particular group of White preservice teachers entered Block III and encountered a literacy methods course infused with investigations of Whiteness. I then explored how these encounters influenced the literacy instruction of Rebekah and Amanda, two of the interns, during student teaching. Chapter 4 presented an analysis of interns' assignments – their revised cultural autobiographies and their big understandings of literacy – that described how they were situated to encounter the intersections of Whiteness and literacy in the Block III course. Chapter 5 described how the interns encountered investigations of Whiteness in the course by engaging in mindset and application work. Lastly, Chapter 6 shared the stories of Amanda and Rebekah, two interns who seemed influenced by the course to attend to issues of culture and race in their literacy teaching. This final chapter provides a synthesis of the findings, discusses related implications, considers the limitations of this study, and suggests directions for future research.

Synthesis of the Findings

In the beginning of this dissertation, I described our schools' great need for transformationist teachers (G. R. Howard, 2006), that is, those individuals who teach and lead in such a way that more of their students, across more of their differences, achieve at a higher level, without giving up who they are. Transformationist teachers unite *knowing* and *doing* in ways that interrupt White dominance and make learning more accessible and equitable for all of their students.

This synthesis presents findings from the study framed by the knowing and doing structure that shaped the research questions in Chapter 1. The synthesis of *knowing*

findings considers what the interns knew – their mindset – at the beginning of Block III and how that knowledge manifested itself and changed as they encountered Whiteness within their literacy methods course. The synthesis of *doing* findings considers the movement from knowledge to action that occurred when Amanda and Rebekah applied their learning about critical multiculturalism to literacy instruction during student teaching.

Knowing

The interns' positioning at the beginning of the Block III course influenced their engagement with the infused curriculum and impacted the understandings they constructed. Chapter 4 described the interns in the course as typical teacher education candidates. They were mostly White, middle-class females who grew up in English-speaking homes in fairly homogeneous White communities. Therefore, it was not surprising that they exhibited many of the characteristics Sleeter (2001, 2008) attributed to White preservice teachers. They were unaware of institutional racism, had little contact with communities of color, valued colorblindedness, and lacked awareness of themselves as cultural beings. However, they did not show evidence that they had a deficit framework for viewing students of color – as typical of White preservice teachers. This may be attributed to previous university coursework as well as fieldwork in diverse classrooms.

Even though the interns appeared willing to work in diverse classrooms and professed positive attitudes toward differences, it was clear that they were operating from positions of unexamined Whiteness. In their cultural autobiographies, many interns described ideological beliefs that conflicted with tenets of Whiteness theory. Table 10

identifies three orientations that emerged from the interns' discussion of differences in their cultural autobiographies. The table suggests how these three orientations align with various group affiliations and ideological beliefs the interns described in Chapter 4.

Table 10

Summary of Orientations and Ideologies

Orientation	Group Affiliation	Beliefs
Political-legal	Democracy	1. Everyone is equal and should be treated equally (expectation that this can and does currently happen in society) 2. Colorblind teaching is ideal because it treats all students as equal 3. Being inclusive means being tolerant and not judging 4. Racism is a problem involving past generations
Religious	Judeo-Christian	1. Others want to be treated the same way I want to be treated (i.e., the Golden Rule) 2. I should "respect" others
Future Teacher	Teaching Profession	1. Teachers should be welcoming and accepting of student differences 2. Teachers should be willing to teach in classrooms with diverse students

Chapter 4 problematized these beliefs because of how they poorly positioned the interns to interrogate Whiteness. Chapter 5 depicted how the interns' ideological beliefs impacted the way they encountered new information regarding Whiteness in the course. For example, when the interns avoided or explained away issues of Whiteness in class, they revealed these ingrained and unexamined beliefs. Their idealized visions of equality were grounded by meritocratic ideals. An imagined equality is at the very root of meritocracy. Everyone has an equal chance to succeed in society; it just takes hard work and effort. In addition, the group of interns who created the collage of their future

students instead of their own Whiteness at the *My People* invitation reverted back to a safe vision of inclusivity rather than examining their own racial identities, an action that might trouble their unexamined beliefs.

Nevertheless, the emerging acknowledgements of Whiteness made by interns in the course indicated that these ideological stances, though constantly undergirding intern thought, could be revised. Intern 10 described how the reading prompted him to consider racism from a new vantage point. And Interns 3 and 17 no longer assumed they should be colorblind in the classroom. They shared stories that acknowledged the cultural and racial undercurrents in the classroom and expressed their frustration when their mentor teachers chose not to address the issues they had observed. To summarize, it appeared that the interns' ideological beliefs prompted their first reactions – their protective and safe reactions – but their ideological beliefs also became sites of internal exploration. They were the places where tension mounted, where resistance arose, but also where new understandings were forged.

While the interns' deep-seated ideologies posed mindset challenges to overcome, the interns also entered Block III with understandings of teaching that situated them to positively consider the intersections of race and literacy. They understood the need for literacy learning to be relevant to students' lives. However, they did not yet connect critical multiculturalism as a way to make content relevant nor did they yet possess the practical pedagogical knowledge necessary to actualize their commitment to making content relevant to students' lives in the classroom. They recognized literacy as a meaning-making endeavor and largely saw themselves as the facilitators of student learning rather than transmitters of knowledge. These beliefs enabled them to assimilate

new ideas about culturally responsive literacy teaching into their schema during Block III. The data showed interns began to identify literacy-specific strategies and community-building plans that could help them make learning relevant for their students.

Though the interns were willing to take a sociocultural approach to literacy, their visions of literacy teaching and learning at the beginning of Block III were not notably critical. They did not discuss critical literacy practices or draw connections between literacy and power relations in their initial depictions of literacy teaching. As a result of exploring Whiteness in Block III, the interns' visions for literacy teaching became noticeably more critical and culturally responsive. Their plans to use literacy to generate conversations about race reflected three of the four critical literacy dimensions identified by Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002): *disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple perspectives,* and *focusing on sociopolitical issues*. Their visions also incorporated culturally responsive elements of instruction, such as: establishing an inclusive community where meaningful work could occur (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Gay, 2000; Wlodkowski & Ginsberg, 1995) and holding affirming attitudes toward diverse students (Villegas & Lucas, 2002). While the interns' visions honored some critical literacy and culturally responsive practices, they had not yet developed a vision which incorporated social action elements of critical literacy and culturally responsive teaching frameworks.

Even though the focus of this section is on intern knowing, as I presented the findings in Chapter 5, it became evident that the interns' knowing was also limited by what the instructors were able to make accessible to them in the course. Though this finding does not directly correspond to the initial research questions about knowing and

doing, it seems worth noting because it truly did impact the interns' understandings and visions of culturally responsive literacy teaching.

Doing

In Chapter 6, I described the individual literacy teaching experiences of two interns, Amanda and Rebekah. Though both interns demonstrated a growing awareness of Whiteness and a commitment to culturally responsive literacy teaching, they had markedly different experiences learning about Whiteness in Block III that influenced the teaching commitments they made at the end of the course. A newcomer to Whiteness theory, Rebekah mentioned having conversations with students, but her main goal focused on integrating multicultural texts in the classroom. Having had a previous meaningful encounter with Whiteness prior to Block III, Amanda described more ambitious teaching objectives. She intended to interrupt White dominance in the curriculum and generate conversations about race within a community of learners. Though the two interns generated different teaching commitments and had vastly different teaching experiences, their stories offer a surprising number of similarities that provide insight into their attempts to be and the constraints in being culturally responsive teachers.

One surprising finding was that both Rebekah and Amanda identified a personally significant story about a time when they surprised themselves by their own success at being culturally responsive. Amanda described a reading session with a student in her class who "opened up" when the content of the text was culturally and personally relevant to her. Rebekah recounted the story of a little boy engaging with a text she had selected for read aloud. Amanda's and Rebekah's stories illustrated the way the content

of books they used with children and the opportunities for student participation that emerged from those texts reframed the student-teacher relationships. It was clear that both interns recognized the significance of those learning encounters even if they were not yet able to make such experiences the norm in their day-to-day literacy interactions with students.

In addition, Amanda and Rebekah both enacted literacy practices that interrupted Whiteness to some degree. Rebekah's beginning awareness of Whiteness prompted her select a read-aloud text with clear emancipatory themes, not just multicultural characters. And even though she did not generate conversation about the content of the text with her students, she did seem to be trying to connect the text with their lives and affirming their identities as she focused on introducing a reading strategy. Amanda's content was more clearly designed to interrupt Whiteness. She willingly integrated silenced voices into the curriculum in an attempt to expose inequity. The little boy who continued working on his *If She Only Knew Me* (Gray & Thomas, 2005) writing showed that the curricular engagements she designed opened possibilities for students to make meaningful connections and "talk back" to society.

While both interns' literacy teaching practices interrupted the perpetuation of Whiteness to some degree, their literacy teaching seemed contained to their own classrooms. The interns had yet to develop a grander critical stance that would help them situate Whiteness as a larger social construct and educational issue to combat by incorporating student student activism into the literacy curriculum.

Finally, it was notable that Amanda and Rebekah's efforts to be culturally responsive were both situated by their own understandings and shaped by their student

teaching contexts. Committed to integrating multicultural texts, Rebekah did so safely within pre-established literacy structures that supported her teaching but also kept her from venturing into riskier conversations with students. She experienced the support of an established community which enabled children accomplish meaningful work and experience some agency while doing so. In addition, Rebekah carried on her mentor's teaching model which "demanded, reinforced, and produced academic excellence" (Ladson-Billings, 1995a, p. 160), a notable trait of culturally responsive teaching.

While Amanda had a great deal of freedom over the content of her instruction, the behavior issues in her classroom kept students from engaging fully with the texts she selected. Mr. Johnson's classroom management style and literacy structures did not align with Amanda's vision of a collaborative classroom community. Even though Amanda attempted to build community, Mr. Johnson was unable to support her in the development of an inclusive community. She could not replicate his authoritative style.

Whereas Lawrence (1997) found that the philosophies and worldviews of the cooperating teachers largely influenced the teaching practices of the student teachers, I saw both interns make attempts to be culturally responsive in ways that extended beyond their mentors' teaching philosophies. Nevertheless, their mentor teachers did greatly influence their opportunities to modify literacy content and enact culturally responsive practices.

Implications

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 discussed several implications related to each stage of the interns' experience – entering Block III, encountering the Block III curriculum, and teaching literacy in classrooms with racially, culturally, and linguistically diverse

students. Appendix I offers a summary of the implications for theory, practice, and research provided in those three chapters. Rather than restating those implications here, this chapter offers a broader contemplation of the infusion experience. It provides additional thoughts and considerations based on the theoretical framing of the study, the interns' developmental journey from the beginning of the course to student teaching, and the future research directions that may support our understandings of methods course infusion.

Considerations for Theory

Critical multiculturalism served as a significant theoretical framework for this study. It both informed the implementation of Whiteness investigations into the Block III course and acted as a framework for analyzing and understanding what happened in the course and student teaching experiences. This section begins by considering the usefulness of critical multiculturalism as a foundation for Whiteness infusion work. It proceeds to consider how the integration of critical multicultural principles in the course intersected with the other theoretical frameworks discussed in this study.

Critical multiculturalism. In looking at the use of critical multiculturalism across the scope of this study, one significant observation that stands out regarding the the theory is that it should be regarded as a theoretical framework and not an evaluation tool. In analyzing the interns' course and teaching experiences, it was challenging to keep the theory in its rightful place. It pointed to areas where the interns were gaining awareness, and it highlighted the ways in which the interns' emerging understandings or resistance to the new ideas fell short of the theoretical ideal. Comparing the interns' growth to the theoretical ideal in this evaluative manner brought a deficit perspective to

the analysis by continuously showing that the interns had not yet arrived at a place of consciousness or praxis. They did not fully recognize the role of schools in social reproduction. They were only beginning to consider their own racial identities and White privilege, and they had not been in the classroom enough to deconstruct their romanticized ideas about difference. Thus, I reiterate, critical multiculturalism is helpful for envisioning a theoretical ideal, but it should not be used as an evaluative tool.

The tenets of the theory, though, can help us as teacher educators decide what critical multicultural content should be included in methods courses. It can help us recognize the elements of critical thought that are present when interns develop and verbalize ideas related to Whiteness, structural inequities, and other critical multicultural concepts. But in considering the theory, it is important to realize that the theoretical underpinnings of critical multiculturalism represent endpoint destinations. They describe the idealized consciousness and actions of individuals with a firm grasp of critical theory, not the starts and stops of novices who are likely to be encountering such new, and revolutionary, ways of thinking for the first time in their university teaching courses.

In looking at the interns' responses when the principles of critical multiculturalism were incorporated into the course, it is also evident that this theoretical framework required the preservice teachers in the study to reframe their current ways of thinking and being. They could not easily assimilate notions involved in critical multiculturalism into their understandings of the world and how it works. For the interns, considering these principles involved disrupting the taken-for-granted and unseen elements of schooling and society. Encountering schools as social institutions, considering differences as conflictual and non-harmonious, and confronting their own

racial identities and White privilege required the interns to adopt new ways of thinking and being in the world.

As the interns encountered these new perspectives, they demonstrated instances of growth and resistance simultaneously. As teacher educators we should expect critical multiculturalism to incite an intermingling of growth and resistance. Critical multiculturalism draws from critical theory which is not easily accessible to undergraduates (Huerta-Charles, 2007; Weiner, 2007). As we consider critical multiculturalism as a foundation for Whiteness infusions, it is important to think about how to make this theory more accessible and less off-putting to undergraduate students. The implications discussed in Chapter 5 provide several suggestions for addressing this issue. In addition, we should work to offer preservice teachers repeated encounters with the principles from critical multicultural and the gift of time as they process such new and different ideas. Furthermore, we should consider how we can offer preservice teachers opportunities to carry their emerging thoughts into classrooms and society and to come back to reflect on what they see.

Critical multiculturalism shaped the content of Block III and influenced the thinking and teaching practices of the interns. Many of the interns' course experiences, visions, and implementations demonstrated intersections between critical multiculturalism and other theoretical frameworks.

Intersection 1: Critical literacy. Bringing a critical multicultural perspective into a literacy course brought a critical dimension to the interns' visions of literacy teaching. Coming into the course, the interns' understandings of literacy did not incorporate a critical dimension even though they had encountered critical literacy theory

in earlier coursework. Even though the Block III instructors did not offer explicit instruction in critical literacy practices, the interns' visions and implementations of literacy teaching incorporated some elements of literacy teaching typically associated with a critical literacy pedagogy. The interns described their commitment to have conversations with students about race and other "critical issues" (Intern 17). During student teaching, Amanda and Rebekah incorporated texts that were critical and multicultural in nature. These visions and implementations seemed to emerge because of their growing awareness of racial injustice rather than because they understood how to be teachers of critical literacy.

Though the interns naturally adopted a more critical stance as their awareness of racial and social injustice grew, it seems likely that explicit exposure to critical literacy theory could have supported and extended the kinds of teaching visions they were beginning to imagine at the end of Block III. Hadjioannou and Fu (2007) assert that critical literacy is a necessary tool for teaching literacy in a multicultural world. In this light, it seems worth considering critical literacy as a pedagogy that can help teachers transfer awareness incited by critical multiculturalism into classroom literacy practices. Being able to consider issues of identity, agency, and power in texts and society, as well as having a firm grasp of the dimensions of critical literacy summarized by Lewison, Flint, and Van Sluys (2002) – disrupting the commonplace, interrogating multiple perspectives, focusing on sociopolitical issues, and taking action and promoting social justice – provides preservice teachers a greater arsenal for constructing literacy activities that can interrupt Whiteness.

While critical literacy may provide pedagogic guidance for bringing a lens of Whiteness and critical multiculturalism into the classroom, it is not necessarily a theory that privileges this lens. As we begin to recognize the significance of developing teaching practices that deconstruct Whiteness, it may be worth examining critical literacy practices to determine if and how Whiteness is acknowledged within current critical literacy pedagogy.

Intersection 2: Culturally responsive teaching. Setting out on this study, I expected culturally responsive teaching frameworks to provide guidance in recognizing the influence of critical multicultural principles in the interns' visions and implementations of literacy teaching. However, I found these frameworks somewhat problematic because there was not consensus among the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching outlined in the frameworks. They collectively incorporated so many "culturally responsive" dispositions and teaching practices that it was difficult to identify the natural connections between critical multiculturalism and classroom teaching practices. This was particularly true because not all of the frameworks incorporated or privileged the critical position which is central to critical multiculturalism. Nevertheless, these frameworks did help me identify some of the culturally responsive classroom practices (e.g., community building and using student background knowledge) that supported the interns as they attempted to integrate new content and concepts into their literacy instruction.

Intersection 3: Sociocultural theory. Sociocultural theory underscored the interns' abilities to consider their students' lives and make meaningful connections between culture and teaching. This foundation allowed the interns to encounter critical

multiculturalism as something relevant to their teaching. The interns realized that race and privilege mattered in teaching because it impacted their students' lives. Although some aspects of sociocultural theory were more accessible to the interns than others, these sociocultural foundations were important in helping the interns create learning experiences where culture, race, privilege, etc. could be troubled, even if they were not yet able to fully bring these critical dimensions into their teaching. Sociocultural theory helped them a) create social and collaborative structures for literacy instruction, b) facilitate student learning experiences, c) value children's backgrounds and interests when selecting texts and creating assignments, and d) situate teaching and learning in multiple contexts (e.g., large group mini lessons, small group instruction, independent reading and writing, and individual student conferences). By helping them consider classrooms as social spaces, sociocultural theory laid the groundwork and created space for critical multiculturalism to influence their thinking and teaching, even if it was not yet fully realized.

In achieving a critical multicultural stance toward teaching, multiple theoretical perspectives support teacher development, some of which appear to be even more accessible to preservice teachers than critical multiculturalism itself.

Considerations for Practice

This study provided many glimpses of the interns as they entered Block III, encountered investigations of Whiteness, and student taught. Looking across the images of the interns I encountered in the study, I found myself contemplating the following four aspects related to Whiteness investigations in methods courses: (a) layers and tensions,

(b) intern readiness, (c) possibilities for praxis, and (d) support. This section further describes and discusses these considerations.

Layers and tensions. Exploring Whiteness with undergraduate students was a multi-layered experience fraught with tensions and turbulence. It was not an easy or painless journey for any of us in the study – the interns, the instructors, or myself. Though the findings presented in this dissertation mainly situate the experiences of the interns during the course and student teaching, these findings depict a small piece of a picture that was much larger – a picture that included interns with histories of participation (Rogers & Fuller, 2007), a school district whose theoretical commitment to Courageous Conversations preceded teachers' classroom practices, instructors and a researcher who acted as teachers but also as members of society, mentor teachers with varying teaching abilities and mindsets, and a White researcher beginning to seek out connections between literacy and race, just to name a few.

Although the findings and implications presented in the preceding chapters hint at some of the tensions present in these multiple layers, it feels necessary to unpack and expose them in considering the practice of infusing Whiteness into methods courses. First of all, this type of infusion relies on instructors who are coming to the field of multicultural education as a secondary focus, not to say that it is less important, but it is not their primary area of concentration or knowledge. In the study, the instructors and I came from a background of literacy. Our background knowledge was not centered in issues surrounding multicultural education. We had not taught multiple courses where we were responsible for introducing Whiteness to preservice teachers, and we were just beginning to grapple with these issues as they related to education and in our own lives

outside of the classroom. The instructors and I talked with each other following every large group conversation, and we always felt like each conversation had been a challenge – like pulling teeth, Diane once said. We rode a wave of emotions as we took on this work in the classroom. Often we would strategize and build anticipation for the coming discussion or invitation session only to find ourselves utterly disappointed and feeling like the discussion was nothing more than a flop. Other times, we would hold our breath anticipating negative responses or deafening silence only to realize that our bodies had noticeably relaxed because the conversation had taken a more reflective or receptive turn than we had expected. And no matter how the conversation or activity played out, the instructors and I frequently expressed our gratitude for the opportunity to collaborate in this challenging aspect of the course rather than having to embark on it alone. Nevertheless, it also occurs to me that my presence as a researcher may have placed an added level of pressure on the instructors during the conversations since they knew they would be recorded, transcribed, and possibly analyzed.

Another layer to unpack is the social reality of life outside of the classroom. All of us, myself included, considered these issues in relation to education during the course but our ways of thinking were challenged in ways that moved with us into our daily lives. Though I cannot guarantee the content of the Whiteness investigations impacted all of the interns outside of the confines of the course, I know that many described a new awareness of race and inequity that superseded the scope of education. One of the interns posted a link on the discussion forum inviting her peers to read and comment on a news article she had noticed entitled "Why Black Church Culture Rejects Homosexuality." Another intern told me how she had observed a Starbuck's cashier treat customers

differently and shared her suspicion that it might have been based on race. Still others described the way they had noticed family members appearing more biased and closed-minded than they ever had before.

During the time of the course and at particular times of the analysis, it felt like I could not escape Whiteness. As I read texts about teaching and social justice, I became frustrated with my own lack of political involvement. I found myself in cognitive turmoil as my political views became even more splintered from some of the members of my own family. In addition, I became acutely aware of my own privilege. I began to recognize so many advantages and opportunities that arose in my own life because I was a middle-class White woman.

Though the layers and tensions mentioned above describe only some of those present in the study, I included them in order to provide examples of the depth and complexities involved in the infusion process. The research literature helped me know to expect resistance from the interns during the course (Case & Hemmings, 2005; Causey, Thomas, &Armento, 1999; Cross, 2003; Valli, 1995), but investigations of Whiteness are not confined to the course or the resulting teaching. Investigations of Whiteness trouble our lives as researchers, teachers, and students, but also as individuals living and participating in society. Bringing investigations of Whiteness into a methods course is all-encompassing. It is multi-faceted experience that brings unexpected tensions and considerations.

Readiness. Investigations of Whiteness in the Block III course brought to light many issues related to intern readiness. To begin with, White preservice teachers are typically situated to encounter interrogations of Whiteness in particular ways when they

enter teacher education programs. Sleeter's (2008) metaanalysis work related to Whiteness in teacher education indicates that White preservice teachers are typically unaware of institutional racism, have had little contact with communities of color, value colorblindedness, have a deficit framework for viewing students of color, and lack awareness of themselves as cultural beings. With the exception of having a deficit view, these characteristics were largely descriptive of the interns in the study. Though they possessed these attitudes that hinder recognition of Whiteness, it was quite notable that the interns were also very concerned about their students' lives and backgrounds. Even though they did not know a lot about different cultural groups, they expressed a willingness to learn and a commitment to make their teaching relevant to their students lives. We would be remiss to ignore the passion and willingness they demonstrated toward this objective.

Investigations of Whiteness disrupt preservice teachers' comfort, their taken-for-granted ways of being in the world, and their thinking about teaching, but ultimately, the purpose of incorporating them into courses is to make teaching and learning better for students of color. Thus, preservice teachers may be more willing to engage in these investigations if we can help them understand that the purpose of investigating Whiteness is not simply to deconstruct their stable, unexamined beliefs, but rather to make learning opportunities more equitable and meaningful for the diverse population of students they may be teaching in the future.

A second consideration relates to the interns' readiness to encounter Whiteness in undergraduate coursework. It is unrealistic to expect that every preservice teacher is developmentally ready to deconstruct Whiteness in order to take up a more equitable and

social-justice oriented focus toward teaching, even if we try to make investigations of Whiteness as clearly connected to teaching as possible. However, we still need to provide such opportunities. If we do not offer preservice teachers opportunities to confront Whiteness and examine their own culture and beliefs throughout the teacher education program, then they will automatically carry unexamined Whiteness into their future classrooms which will impact their teaching decisions and their students' opportunities for academic and social success.

Another point about readiness that begs further elucidation is the consideration of investigations of Whiteness as an additional layer in preservice teachers' development. The interns were constructing visions of teaching during Block III. As we integrated investigations of Whiteness in the course, the interns' visions of teaching became more complex, wrapping awareness issues around some of the pedagogic ideas they were already developing. Thus, Whiteness was a consideration, but their main focus was on developing and implementing teaching practices that would allow them to survive their early days of student teaching. During Block III, teaching was still theoretical for them. They had yet to actualize their visions. When the focal interns did move into the classroom, their concerns for equity were intermixed with so many other thoughts related to their day-to-day teaching actions that they were not the primary force shaping instruction. In looking at the influence of awareness on beginning teaching, it seems worth looking more closely at what teaching behaviors influenced by awareness work are actually realistic for beginning teachers given the complexities of their contexts, their developing practices, and their newness to the field of teaching.

In considering readiness, I also feel compelled to trouble the notions of "culturally responsive" or "transformationist" teacher that I presented in the beginning chapters of this document. While I originally outlined these as the ideal destination or response to infusions of critical multiculturalism in coursework, I now feel that these signifiers do not adequately capture the possibilities and nuances involved with this work. For instance, both Amanda and Rebekah were culturally responsive in their teaching at certain times and in particular ways, but as beginning teachers, they had much to master before I could, by definition, call them culturally responsive or transformationist teachers. Yet, at moments, they exemplified characteristics from both of these signifiers. It makes me wonder how we might consider these concepts from a more developmental perspective. Can we begin to define a continuum of growth that helps connect a growing awareness with teaching actions? And can we work to use language that recognize culturally responsive or transformationist actions and attitudes rather than barring new teachers from such official titles because they are still growing in these particular areas?

Possibilities for praxis. While the findings describe the way the interns addressed new ideas in the course, they also hint at the way consciousness inspired action during student teaching. The praxis component of critical multiculturalism is one that is difficult to realize in the college classroom. While it was clear that the awareness generated by the infused curriculum in Block III did incite the student teachers to try implementing strategies for being culturally responsive in their literacy teaching, it was evident that consciousness and praxis were one step removed from each other between the course and student teaching.

During student teaching, Amanda and Rebekah – the focal interns – were acting from beliefs they had formed in the course, but there was no continual avenue for reflection that pushed their thinking as they engaged in student teaching. This separation between attempts to raise consciousness in college courses and teaching action during student teaching points to a need for change in how we think programmatically about university assistance during student teaching. It is important for preservice teachers to continue reflective work and developing awareness even during their student teaching experiences. As teacher education programs, we should look for ways to realize these goals. In addition, Chapter 5 discussed the need for individual courses to pay greater attention to the balance of awareness and pedagogic work simultaneously. Better connecting these areas in college courses might help preservice teachers achieve greater praxis during student teaching and beyond.

Support. Another very glaring issue that we face as we bring investigations of Whiteness into the teacher education curriculum is the support that is available to preservice and beginning teachers as they carry new mindsets and teaching commitments into today's schools. As the study showed, the interns' mentors were unable to lead and guide them in implementing teaching practices grounded in social-justice and equity-oriented thinking. The interns also lacked university support that might encourage them to continue developing their awareness of critical multiculturalism during student teaching.

In sharing the findings from this study at a conference, a listener asked a question that I myself have been pondering since completing this study: who do they have to support them in doing this courageous work? While our coursework may intend to

prepare them for life in schools, we face concrete challenges in doing so. They will be entering schools with few, if any, teachers who have conceptually explored and troubled the notion of Whiteness in relation to teaching. They may work under an administration that does not support critical teaching practices. In addition, most – if not all of them – will be teaching in an environment dictated by the pressures of standardized testing. They are likely to receive text books and curriculum guides that do not incorporate a critical stance. Such conditions do not encourage beginning teachers to continue growing in their awareness and reflecting on issues of Whiteness in teaching.

We, in teacher education, should consider how we can prepare them for the challenges they will face as they bring new ideas into classrooms, school buildings, and districts. If possible, we should identify teachers who are in the advanced stages of transformationist teaching and find ways to connect them with student teachers and recent graduates so that this courageous work will continue rather than stalling or regressing.

These considerations for teacher education seem to provide more questions than answers at this point. However, further research into infusions of Whiteness in teacher education may help us determine paths for more successful infusion efforts that lead to transformed teaching practices.

Considerations for Research

Exploring the intersections between Whiteness and literacy teaching led to many new and unanswered questions about infusions of Whiteness in educational coursework and the influence of such infusions on classroom teaching. Although there are many

possible directions for future research, this study points to five compelling avenues to pursue.

First, further research is needed to identify the characteristics of literacy teaching practices that interrupt the perpetuation of White privilege and domination. Teacher educators would benefit from knowing more about transformationist literacy practices. I would argue that such research could build from Ladson-Billings' (1992, 1995a, 1995b) work on culturally relevant instruction in which she studied the similarities among teachers who worked effectively with students of color in order to generate a framework for culturally responsive teaching. In the same way, research can investigate the K-12 classrooms where teachers are enacting transformationist literacy teaching practices in order to see what we can learn from the curriculum, the pedagogical practices, and the teacher-student interactions in those classrooms.

A second direction for future research is to consider how we can move toward praxis. We might begin by investigating the relationship between awareness and pedagogy when addressing Whiteness in education courses. We need to know more about the optimal balance of time and attention that should be paid to raising awareness and developing pedagogical practices. Such research could explore the degree to which awareness must be developed before preservice teachers are able to make meaningful connections with practice, and it could also explore what happens when awareness and pedagogical practices are addressed in a more simultaneous fashion than what occurred in the Block III model. Additionally, it is important for teacher education programs to consider systematic ways that individual courses and collective programs can progress

from building awareness of Whiteness to connecting it with teaching practices during student teaching and beyond.

A third research implication relates to teacher educator competency. We need to know what makes instructors effective in infusion models. There is a need for research that explores the teacher educator's knowledge of Whiteness and their ability to infuse content-area instruction. In addition, research should work to determine pedagogical practices that can help instructors move beyond awareness to pedagogical actions in infusion models. Moreover, research should explore the ways student readiness intersects teacher competency. In this study, the interns were not able to assimilate every idea the course instructors introduced in the class. Research could help to identify the ways teacher educators can most effectively differentiate content for varying degrees of student readiness.

Fourth, this study supports the call to infuse Whiteness in education courses which are comprised of predominantly White students; however, this call raises other questions about the relevance of Whiteness for other ethnic groups. The interns, instructors, and researcher in this study were all White; thus, naming and identifying Whiteness was transformational for them because it allowed them to see what was previously invisible. However, White dominance is not necessarily as invisible to everyone as it was to the White interns in the study. Although several directions for future research exist, the following questions lingered for me after the study. Is Whiteness a construct that is transformative for all ethnic groups or does it work best with White students? How should Whiteness be interrogated in classrooms comprised of White students and students of other ethnicities? Would infusion be necessary if we, in

teacher education, could recruit and maintain a more diverse teaching force? Does the instructor's ethnicity have an impact on preservice teachers' considerations of Whiteness?

Finally, we need additional longitudinal research that follows preservice teachers from coursework infused with Whiteness through their student teaching placements and into their first years of teaching. Such longitudinal research can investigate the effects of their contexts on the teachers' awareness and commitment to culturally responsive teaching practices. It can study the role of support during student teaching in furthering or diminishing the efforts of preservice teachers' enactments of culturally responsive literacy practices. Research can explore the types of professional development and possibly coaching/mentoring models that help preservice teachers continue their progress toward becoming transformationist teachers. It can also explore the factors that affect their abilities to be culturally responsive in their first years of teaching.

Limitations

This dissertation explored the journey of a group of preservice teachers during and after their encounters with Whiteness in their literacy methods course. As with all research, this study had distinct limitations. First, the study could only illuminate the awareness and pedagogical understandings that 24 White interns developed during a single methods course that was not part of a programmatic infusion model. There is no way of knowing how the understandings would have been impacted if the course had been part of a programmatic effort at infusing Whiteness or if the class had included individuals of different races or ethnicities. Second, the study only described the experiences of two of the interns who exhibited potential for being culturally responsive

during student teaching even though the interns demonstrated a wide variety of readiness for implementing culturally responsive teaching.

Third, the study only described how Amanda and Rebekah enacted practices from Block III during student teaching and discussed the supports and limitations they experienced, but it did not consider the influence of their placement on their own "restructuring, growth, and regression" (Causey, et al, 2000). While it was longitudinal in that it followed the interns' progression from the beginning of the Block III course through their student teaching placements, it did not persist in following the student teachers into their second student teaching placement or their teaching careers.

Finally, my presence and interactions with Amanda and Rebekah during their student teaching drew their attention to the racial and cultural elements of their literacy teaching thus resulting in teaching decisions that may not have emerged in the same way if I had not be present as a researcher.

Conclusion

Infusing critical multiculturalism – including the construct of Whiteness – into a literacy methods course was notably influential for many of the interns in the course. It unsettled their ways of being in the world and caused them to envision new literacy teaching commitments that were more critical and culturally responsive than their previous understandings. For Amanda and Rebekah, the focal interns, investigations of Whiteness in Block III clearly shaped their views of their students and impacted their attempts to make literacy instruction relevant to students' lives within the confines of their particular student teaching classrooms. Although Amanda and Rebekah did not become transformationist teachers in a single semester, the Block III course created

conditions for possibilities in their teaching that would not have been possible if they had not encountered investigations of Whiteness alongside literacy methods.

While the results of a single course are limited, these findings point to the hope infused courses offer teacher education programs seeking ways to help preservice teachers become more culturally responsive. Infusion models create conditions for possibilities, but we, as teacher educators, must take on the challenging work of infusion and be intentional in our efforts to make infused courses rich with awareness and pedagogical work aimed at interrupting Whiteness and creating more equitable teaching practices. We have the unique opportunity to plant and nurture seed ideas that – with continued care and cultivation – can help beginning teachers combine knowing and doing in ways that make learning more just and equitable for all students.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Course Planning

Cognitive Ladder for E341
Theme: Culturally Responsive Teaching
How can I be the best literacy teacher for all students?

Moral Commitments as a Teacher			
To learn about, appreciate, and make connections to each student's unique "funds of knowledge" developed through their lived experiences.	To take responsibility for making every interaction with children purposeful and supportive of their learning.	To expect and support children in making and remaking their identities through literacy.	To interrupt the dominant cultural assumptions and systems of racism and classism that privilege some learners over others.

Concepts	cultural identity	Whiteness (white dominance)	systemic racism and classism	Learning differences

Content Explorations	Readings and strategies

<u>Invitations</u>
In the News
Cultural Iceberg
I am From?
New Kid in Class
White Privilege?
Talking Back to Texts
I am America
How are we alike? How are we different?
Popular Press
Professional Readings

Rationale for Cognitive Ladder Concepts

Cultural identity work was important because we knew that the White preservice teachers entering the Block III methods course were likely to see themselves as cultureless (Perry, 2001). Consequently, they were not likely to recognize the ways their own culture privileged them in society at large and more specifically positions them to work with children of color in the classroom. Closely related to this idea of cultural identity is the notion of Whiteness which we also parenthesized as white dominance. In order for preservice teachers to embrace the moral commitments that we laid out, they needed to confront the workings of white dominance in schools and society. This is closely tied to the third concept we intended to include in the course which was exposure to systemic racism and classism. Often individuals think that because they do not personally discriminate against others based on race or class, they are not racist (Bonilla-Silva, 2002). They dismiss racism and classism as individual acts against individual people. However, our goal was for the preservice teachers to recognize that racism and classism are bigger social constructs that are systemic and institutionalized. The final concept was learning differences. This concept yielded an important connection to the "meeting the individual needs of learners in an inclusive setting" component of the course (Course Syllabus), and we felt it was necessary for the preservice teachers to understand learning differences and consider ways that classrooms can become places that celebrate differences rather than considering them deficits. Although the course planning was still underway at the conclusion of this meeting, we knew that the various readings and their corresponding discussions, in-class invitations, and course assignments

would be our primary vehicles for helping preservice teachers understand and arrive at these moral commitments in six short weeks.

Appendix B: Course Readings

These texts focused specifically on literacy methods, but had little or no connection to critical multiculturalism in their content or usage in the course.

- Anderson, Carl (2005). *Assessing writers*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Howard, M. (2009) *RTI from all sides: What every teacher needs to know*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann. pp. 1-33.
- Moore, Rita and Gilles, Carol, (2005). *Reading conversations: Retrospective miscue analysis with struggling readers, grades 4-12.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Ray, Katie Wood (2006). *Study driven a framework for planning units of study in the Writing Workshop.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Though most of the foundational texts for the course had no overt ties to critical multiculturalism, the following two primary course texts were actually very explicit in addressing issues of difference and student agency.

- Johnston, Peter (2004). *Choice Words: How Our Language Affects Children's Learning*. Portland, ME: Stenhouse.
- Sapon-Shevin, M. (2010). *Because We Can Change the World: A Practical Guide to Building Cooperative, Inclusive Classroom Communities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Course Readings Intentionally Integrated for Infusion Purposes

- Au, W. (2009). Diversity vs. White privilege: An interview with Christine Sleeter. In W. Au (Ed.), *Rethinking multicultural education: Teaching for racial and cultural justice* (pp. 37-44). Milwaukee, WI: Rethinking Schools.
- Blanchett, W. J. (2006). Disproportionate representation of African American students in special education: Acknowledging the role of White privilege and racism. *Educational Researcher, 35*(6), 24-28.
- Brooks, K. (2005). Language and cultural integration *Language and Diversity Consultants* (Vol. 1). Indianapolis, IN.
- Harry, B., & Klinger, J. (2007). Discarding the deficit model. *Educational Leadership, 64*(5), 16-21.
- Richert, A. E., Donahue, D. M., & LaBoskey, V. K. (2009). Preparing White teachers to teach in a racist nation: What do they need to know and be able to do? In W. Ayers, T. Quinn & D. Stovall (Eds.), *Handbook of social justice in education* (pp. 640-653). New York: Routledge.
- Singleton, G. E., & Hays, C. (2008). Beginning courageous conversations about race. In M. Pollock (Ed.), *Everyday antiracism: Getting real about race in schools* (pp. 18-23). New York: The New Press.
- Soltero-González, L. (2009). Preschool Latino immigrant children: Using the home language as a resource for literacy learning. *Theory into Practice, 48*(4), 283-289. doi: 10.1080/00405840903192771

- Villegas, A. M., & Lucas, T. (2007). The culturally responsive teacher. *Educational Leadership, 64*(6), 28.

Description of Infused Readings and Associated Discussion Format

Preparing White teachers to Teach in a Racist Nation: What Do They Need to Know and Be Able to Do? by A.E. Richert, D.M. Donahue, & V.K. LaBoskey
Summary: Though short, this dense chapter provided a challenging read for the preservice teachers. Written primarily to an audience of teacher educators, this literature review addressed the understandings and competencies that White preservice teachers should develop in order to teach children of color successfully. Not only was the literature review format a new and highly sophisticated academic structure for the preservice teachers to navigate, but it also challenged them to understand their own racial identity development and recognize how their Whiteness privileges them and prevents them from seeing how they participate in perpetuating racism and oppression of people of color. In addition to developing knowledge about race in relation to teaching, the chapter posited that preservice teachers must also learn about the philosophical, theoretical, and empirical justifications for the pedagogical approaches that result in high achievement of students of color so they can use them strategically in the classroom. Presenting a bulk of information in a few short pages, the chapter presented general approaches to constructing learning communities, engaging in culturally relevant teaching, developing positive classroom management, utilizing effective instructional practices, and expanding the content of the curriculum.
Discussion format: This reading was assigned in two parts. After reading the first half of the chapter, the preservice teachers met in small groups to talk about Whiteness and concluded with a whole group discussion. After reading the second half of the article two weeks later, the preservice teachers brought the text to circle and spent several minutes discussing a point of interest from the chapter with a partner before moving into a large group discussion.
Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race by Glenn Singleton
Summary: This short chapter recommended four agreements that participants should adopt when engaging in conversations about race. The first agreement, stay engaged, may be easy at first, but the riskier topics get, the more difficult it is to stay engaged and committed. The second agreement, expect to experience discomfort, calls participants to "grow accustomed to the discomfort of abandoning old habits" p. 21. Speak your truth, the third agreement, reminds them to be honest about thoughts, feelings, and opinions regardless of how unpopular those views might be. The final agreement, expect and accept a lack of closure, explains that conversations are ongoing; there cannot be closure in the classroom for a topic that is not closed in the real world. The chapter presented conversations about race as something that should be embarked upon with colleagues but that should then be moved into the classroom with students.
Discussion format: The preservice teachers were divided into four groups. Each group

discussed one of the agreements and wrote that agreement on a poster. The posters were posted in the room while the group presented the contents of their section to the rest of the class.
Discarding the Deficit Model by B. Harry and J. Klinger
Summary: The authors of this article are concerned with the disproportionate placement of some minority groups in special education. They highlight the ambiguity and subjectivity involved in the process of identifying high-incidence disabilities. In addition, they bring to light the connection between the historical devaluation of minorities in the United States and the placement of minority students in special education. Not only do the authors explain that the IQ tests used to screen for cognitive disabilities are culturally biased, but they also posit that the school personnel and conditions of schooling may be responsible for children being mis-labeled. They challenge readers to look at what children bring and what they can do rather than the skills and abilities they lack, which they also point out may be as simple in cultural expectations and experiences before coming to school.
Discussion format: Students were asked to bring an index card listing questions or wonderings from the article. Diane led the whole-group discussion as a Socratic Seminar and asked that all of the comments and ideas introduced be grounded in the text.
Language and Cultural Integration by K. Brooks (also booklist and activity description)
Summary: This reading assignment consisted of an informative newsletter for educators about supporting English Language Learning (ELL) students in the classroom, a booklist of K-12 multicultural literature, and a one page how-to explanation of using choral reading and reader's theater with ELL students. The research presented shows that it is problematic when teachers expect ELL students to adapt to an English-only classroom that reflects white, middle class curricula. Instead, ELL students need opportunities to bring their prior knowledge, languages, and cultural backgrounds to the learning process. The articles affirm ELL students' bilingual development by reiterating the interdependence of first and second language development. Teachers are encouraged to provide bilingual materials for students even if they are not bilingual themselves. In addition, this reading provided several classroom strategies for developing bilingual readers.
Discussion format: After reading the text, the preservice teachers entered an online forum where they posted a response to the text and commented back to at least two peers' postings.
Preschool Latino Immigrant Children: Using the Home Language as a Resource for Literacy Learning by L. Soltero-González
Summary: The article describes the way Latino children in a preschool classroom use their home language to make connections between English texts and their own experiences. It gives a glimpse into some of the activities used by a specific teacher and

in a specific classroom setting. Though the literacy instruction is provided in English, the article shows the important way that children's social use of Spanish helps them in their literacy learning. She suggests that "literacy instruction organized around social interaction, guided dialogue, and direct instruction that supports children in making use of their full linguistic resources has the potential to connect schooled literacy practices to children's life experiences and interests, and broaden their literacy practices and developing academic strengths" (p. 283).
Discussion format: After reading the text, the preservice teachers entered an online forum where they posted a response to the text and commented back to at least two peers' postings.
The Culturally Responsive Teacher by A. M. Villegas & T. Lucas
Summary: The authors first paint a picture of a bilingual high school student who uses math and language skills successfully in the real world each day but whose teachers are unable to see her talents in these areas and consider her disinterested in learning. The authors then present a framework for successfully teaching students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds that consists of six salient qualities: understanding how learners construct knowledge, learning about students' lives, being socioculturally conscious, holding affirming views about diversity, using appropriate instructional strategies, and advocating for all students.
Discussion format: The preservice teachers did this reading as a jigsaw. Diane read the introduction about the bilingual student and the framework. She divided the class into four groups and assigned each group a section of the article to read. Each member of the group was responsible for knowing the content of their particular section well enough to describe it to someone else. Following the reading, the groups were reformed so that each member of the group had read a separate part of the article. Once each group member discussed their part, the entire article had been discussed in the small group. During this group sharing, each group was responsible for describing the six salient qualities in their own words.
Disproportionate Representation of African American Students in Special Education: Acknowledging the Role of White Privilege and Racism by W. J. Blanchett
Summary: From the outset of the article, Blanchett argues that "race matters" in the disproportionate referral and placement of African American students in special education. She presents the inequitable conditions of special education referral and instruction as a function of "White privilege." Throughout the article, Blanchett focuses on how White privilege and racism contribute to and maintain disproportionality in special education by insufficiently funding schools attended primarily by African American children, by employing curriculum that is culturally biased, and by inadequately preparing educators to teach African American learners and other students of color.

Discussion format: Upon coming to circle, each preservice teacher was asked to identify one sentence, phrase, or paragraph that drew him or her in. To begin the conversation, someone would read his or her chosen sentence aloud. The next reader should then read aloud an idea that connects in some way until everyone has had a turn. In this way, the text that is read aloud acts as a springboard for the large group conversation.
Diversity vs. White Privilege: An Interview with Christine Sleeter edited by W. Au
Summary: This is a fairly general interview about Sleeter's experiences working in the field of multicultural education. It deals with issues of White privilege, colorblind teaching, and some of the social conditions that influence schooling. The interview provides a personal voice and a softer tone than the Blanchett article.
Discussion format: This article was supposed to be the final reading before the preservice teachers began their full-time student teaching placements. However, the instructors decided to postpone the reading assignment until after the preservice teachers completed student teaching because of the resistance they felt in response to the Blanchett article. They decided to let the topic simmer for a bit, and they also felt it would be beneficial for the preservice teachers to gain some experiences in diverse classroom settings before processing the content of this article.

Appendix C: Invitations

Invitation List and Alignment with Cognitive Ladder

	Concept Targeted			
	Cultural identity	Whiteness (white dominance)	Systemic racism and classism	Learning differences
A Day in the Life		X		
Cultural Iceberg	X			
Different Children, Different Literacies	X			X
I Am From	X			X
If the World Were a Village	X		X	
Immigrants in Their Own Words	X			
My People	X	X		
Popular Press		X		
Power of Poetry		X		
What is White Privilege?		X	X	

A Day in the Life

Note from the instructors:

There are two stories for you to read at this invitation. When we first read them, we worried that they might seem a little too contrived.

But we returned to them because these stories reflect the way our own experiences contrast with the experiences of African American teachers and administrators we have worked with in Indianapolis over the past several years. We know the stories may sound a bit cliché, but we have to say that these accounts do ring true to us.

Everyone has unique stories and these were obviously written to make a point. But try to take up the perspective of the author and see if you can see the work of cultural forces beyond our control in both stories.

What sorts of interactions do make an impact on the lives of these educators?

Have you experienced institutional racism in your life? What was its impact on you?

What can we learn from these stories?

Create a graffiti board as you discuss these stories. Capture the gist of your conversation in colorful key words, images, and symbols.

Cultural Iceberg

Part 1 – Seeing Culture

With your group, you are invited to explore the picture books and share your personal experiences with culture.

As you read and talk, use the cultural features guide to locate and discuss features of culture that are visible to you in the books/your experiences.

Part 2 – The Iceberg

Did you know that only about one-eighth of an iceberg is visible above the water? The rest is below. Culture is similar to an iceberg. Some aspects are visible, but many others are below water. Even though they are invisible, these factors have a strong impact on a person's life.

Individually, use materials at the invitation to construct a large iceberg to portray your culture (be sure to include a water line). As you add cultural features to your iceberg, place the features so that the visible features of culture are depicted (words or pictures) above the water and the hard to see or invisible features are represented below the water. Think about the cultural features that were apparent from the texts and your personal experiences as you make decisions about where to place each feature.

Share your cultural icebergs with your partner(s). Explain the decisions you made regarding the placement of features. Write your name on the back of your iceberg and leave it at the invitation.

Teaching connection: How does this make you think about your future students? What does this mean for you as a teacher?

Cultural Features Guide

Try to identify the following features in the children's books and in your own experiences with culture.

1. Styles of dress
2. Ways of greeting people
3. Beliefs about hospitality
4. Importance of time
5. Paintings
6. Values
7. Literature
8. Beliefs about child raising (children and teens)
9. Attitudes about personal space/privacy
10. Beliefs about the responsibilities of children and teens
11. Gestures to show you understand what has been told to you
12. Holiday customs
13. Music
14. Dancing
15. Celebrations
16. Concept of fairness
17. Nature of friendship
18. Ideas about clothing
19. Foods
20. Greetings
21. Facial expressions and hand gestures
22. Concept of self
23. Work ethic
24. Religious beliefs
25. Religious rituals
26. Concept of beauty
27. Rules of polite behavior
28. Attitude toward age
29. The role of family
30. General worldview

Picture Books

Title	Author
Hair Dance	Kelly Johnson
When the Shadbush Blooms	Carla Messinger
Amelia's Road	Linda Jacob Altman
The Stars in My Geddoh's Sky	Claire Sidhom Matze
The Gift of the Poinsettia	Pat Mora
Whoever You Are	Mem Fox
The Ugly Vegetable	Grace Lin
Behind the Mask	Yangsook Choi

Different Children, Different Literacies?

The children laying at this invitation tell about some of the different observations a researcher named Shirley Brice Heath made about three different communities during a decade-long study in the Southeastern United States. Trackton was a black working-class community. Roadville was a white working-class community. Both depended on local textile mills for work. The mainstream community was a middle-class community comprised of both whites and blacks. Read the information about the children. Talk with your partner(s) about what you notice.

- What, if anything, surprised you about Heath's observations?
- What is the relationship between culture and literacy?
- What similarities and differences do you see across the children?
- What characteristics would be the most helpful for children in school settings? Why?
- What characteristics might conflict with school/classroom practices? Why?

Imagine the classroom is composed of these three children. Pretend the teacher has just asked the them to write a story to share at Grandparents' Day. Talk with your partner(s) about these questions:

- How would the different children interpret the assignment? What does "story" mean to each child?
- What might they be thinking or feeling?
- What expectations might the teacher consciously or unconsciously hold for the finished product?

Write a thought bubble for at least one child and staple it to the student.

Reflection: How does a child's culture influence his or her literacy development? How well do you think teachers and policies are doing meeting the different literacy needs of children? How does culture currently impact your literacy teaching? How should culture impact literacy teaching?

I Am From

Quietly read the poems at this invitation aloud to each other. Can you see the places and feel the sensations and emotions that these poets describe from their memories.

What things in your life are similar to things in their lives? What things are very different?

How are the places, foods, and experiences people value related to their home culture? Do you have a home culture?

What details from your life would explain your home culture to someone who wanted to know you better?

Brainstorm and draft ideas for your own "Where I'm From" or home culture poem on scratch paper. Then write your own poem.

Add your poem to the others at the invitation.

Where I'm From Texts

Title	Author
Where I'm From (poem)	George Ella Lyon
Momma, Where Are You From?	Marie Bradby
Raised by Women	In Christensen- Teaching for Joy and Social Justice
Music	Christensen
I Was Raised by Video Games	Christensen
Raised	Christensen
Knock Knock	Christensen

If the World Were A Village

David Smith, the author of this book, wants to teach "world-mindedness" as an approach to life.

Study the facts and figures as well as the artwork in the book.

Read pages 30-31 where David shares ideas about how to teach children about the world.

At the end of his discussion, David Smith says we need a way of looking at the world that "tells the story truthfully."

Comment on this idea.

Where in the book did you find something that seemed like a truth to you?

Where would you be interested in doing more research?

Is there a place you would like to visit? Why?

Leave your thoughts behind on a "Comments Sheet."

Immigrants in Their Own Words

Browse through the *Kids Discover Immigration* issue.

Pick out something to read closely on each page and talk about the information.

Give careful attention to the interviews with immigrant teenagers on pages 12 and 13. Read the different questions and compare their answers.

With your partner(s), read aloud *Who Belongs Here*? One person can read the story and the other person can read the informational paragraphs.

What if every American whose ancestors came from another country was forced to leave? Who would be left? Would you?

Study the cover of *Who Belongs Here*? Which face looks most like yours?

Try to draw your face and hair in a way that shows your unique ethnic features.

On the back of your drawing, write your name and a little about what you know about the immigrants in your family.

Resources:
Kids Discover Immigration

Who Belongs Here? An American Story by Margy Burns Knight

My People

Langston Hughes is a well-loved African American poet. Charles Smith Jr. is an acclaimed photographer. Their talents are put together in the book *My People*.

Enjoy the book together. Read it once just focusing on the words. What is the message?

Read it again, focusing more on the pictures and using the VTS questions:

What's going on in the pictures?
What makes you say that?

Think about how this book would look if the poem was about your cultural group. What might stay the same? What might change?

Create your own "My People" collage that uses photos and images to show how <u>your</u> cultural group is unique.

There are magazines, scissors, and glue available.

On the back of your collage, write your name and the cultural group you were trying to depict.

Researching Cultural Diversity Representation in the Popular Press

Collect your data:
Look through the magazines, newspapers, and store circulars/catalogs. What do you notice about the representation of the population in these popular press "containers" (Ray, 2007)?

- How do they represent the population in America?
- What audience are they targeting?
- Why do you think they are targeting that population?
- What do you think it all means?
- ***Create a visual/chart/graph/table that depicts what you observe.***

Analyze your data:

- What do you notice?
- Which of these popular press texts are the most representative of our diverse society? Which are the least?
- What other observations can you make?
- What do you think it means?
- What conclusions, assumptions, or theories can you draw?
- Include your analysis of the data with your graph/visual/chart/table

The Power of Poetry

You are invited to take turns reading aloud the marked (or copied) poems from the different authors included in this invitation.

- Jorge Argueta (Salvadoran and Pipil Nahua Indian)
- Langston Hughes (African American)
- Jane Medina (Teacher from California, Bilingual Author)
- Janet Wong (American of Chinese and Korean descent)

As you read and listen, try to feel and experience these poems like the authors. What big ideas are raised in these poems? Think about why the authors might have written these poems.

Look back over the poems individually. Select a word, phrase, line, or short stanza of poetry to write on the butcher paper. The text you select should do two things:

1) Give you a powerful visual image.
2) Connect to the big themes or ideas from the poems in a way that you can explain.

Write the selected text on the butcher and add your visual image next to the words.

Talk with your partner about the text you selected and the picture you drew.

Study the text and images others have left on the butcher paper. Do people seem to be making sense of the texts in the same ways you are?

Teaching Connection: How might your students connect with these poems? Whose voices are present and whose are missing? Why do you think they're absent? How might you modify this to make it relevant and appropriate for your students?

What about White Privilege?

View and discuss these YouTube videos:

- ABC 20/20 What Would You Do?
- Mirrors of Privilege
- White People to the Rescue

Read and discuss the article about white privilege written 20 years ago by Peggy McIntosh, an author you saw on the video.

Discuss each of these paragraphs with your partner(s).

Disapproving of the system won't be enough to change it. I was taught to think that racism could end if white individuals changed their attitude. But a "white" skin in the United States opens many doors for whites whether or not we approve of the way dominance has been conferred on us. Individual acts can palliate but cannot end, these problems.

To redesign social systems we need first to acknowledge their colossal unseen dimensions. The silences and denials surrounding privilege are the key political tool here. They keep the thinking about equality or equity incomplete, protecting unearned advantage and conferred dominance by making these subjects taboo. Most talk by whites about equal opportunity seems to me now to be about equal opportunity to try to get into a position of dominance while denying that systems of dominance exist.

What do you think?
Is white privilege an issue? How does it impact urban teachers?

Try to articulate and write an answer to these questions on one of the large post-it notes. Leave it with the invitation.

Resources:
<u>You Tube Videos</u>
ABC 20/20 What Would You Do? http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HIVgMvuCM_k
Mirrors of Privilege http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bsylE79Hm30&feature=related
White People to the Rescue http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMs0KNu9Txg

Article:
McIntosh, Peggy (1988). White Privilege: Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack.

Appendix D: Methodology

Research Timeline - Depicts my interactions with individuals involved in the study across the course of the semester.

Time	Instructors	Interns	Focal Interns (4)	Classroom Teachers
Pre-course Summer 2010	**Collaborated on course design**			**Obtained district consent for study**
Course August 23-September 30	**Continued conversations, collaborated in facilitating**	**Observed and participated in course activities, collected data – fieldnotes, audio-recordings, course assignments, course documents, artifacts**	**Identified focal interns** **Obtained consent**	**Contacted school principals and mentor teachers to explain project, obtain consent, and set up initial observations**
Early October			**Interviewed interns** **Began e-mail reflections**	**Observed mentor teachers' literacy instruction**
Late October/Early November			**Observed interns' literacy instruction #1** **Continued e-mail reflections**	**Interviewed mentor teachers**
Mid November			**Observed interns' literacy instruction #2** **Continued e-mail reflections**	
Late November	**Collaborated on final course**		**Observed interns' literacy instruction #3**	

Time	Instructors	Interns	Focal Interns (4)	Classroom Teachers
	session		**Continued e-mail reflections**	
Early December		**Reviewed interns' online postings for final course**	**Conducted focus group session**	

Anticipated Interview Questions for Classroom Teachers

Teaching Background

- How long have you been teaching and in what grades/areas?
- How many of those years have been in Lawrence schools?
- What subjects do you feel best prepared to teach? Why?
- Is English your first language? What other languages do you speak and how fluently?
- Tell me about the methods that you use for teaching literacy. Are there other methods you have tried through the years? What makes you favor the methods you now use?

Attitude and Knowledge About Culturally Responsive Teaching

- What do you know about Lawrence Township's Beyond Diversity initiative? What do you think about the initiative?
- How do you see your own racial/ethnic identity impacting your classroom instruction?
- What efforts do you make to connect your teaching with the student cultures present in your classroom?
- How knowledgeable do you feel about teaching children whose racial/ethnic background is different from your own? Why?
- What advice would you give your student teachers about teaching in diverse classrooms?

Relationship with Student Teacher(s)

- Tell me why you decided to have a student teacher this semester.
- Can you think of a metaphor to describe the ideal student teacher-cooperating teacher relationship?
- What is your responsibility as a cooperating teacher to your student teacher? What ways do you try to support the growth and development of the student teacher?
- How do you feel about the student teacher trying new things with your students?
- How do you feel when a student teacher has different ideas about teaching than you do?

Anticipated Student Teacher Interview Questions

Thoughts about self, teaching, and students

- Do you think a person's race impacts their ability to achieve? Why or why not?
- Does being aware of culture impact the way that you teach? Why or why not?
- Tell me about your experience with the literacy invitations and readings about race and teaching in K307/E341.
- How would you go about learning about the cultural resources students bring into the classroom?
- How had you thought about your own race/ethnicity/culture prior to entering K307/E341?
- What personal experiences have shaped your racial/cultural/ethnic identity?
- What other courses helped you think about issues of race in teaching? What did you learn from those experiences?

Literacy teaching and culture

- When you have your own classroom, how do you plan to teach reading and writing?
- How did your understandings of teaching literacy change throughout the course?
- Does **your** race matter when you teach reading and writing? Why? How does this impact the way you think about and plan literacy instruction?
- What do you think it means to teach literacy in a way that accounts for the cultural differences of the students in your classroom? How important do you feel it is to do this?
- In literacy instruction, how do you learn about your students?
- How do you build from your students' cultural backgrounds in literacy instruction?

Classroom application

- Describe the classroom environment where you're student teaching this semester.
- Describe the literacy instruction in your student teaching classroom. How do you envision/are you maintaining and adapting the structure that is currently in place? Why would you maintain and change those particular areas?
- Tell me about your relationship with your cooperating teacher this semester. What are you learning from him or her? Does he or she consider culture important in teaching?

Anticipated Focus Group Discussion

- Does a student's race/ethnicity matter in their education?
- What is your responsibility to the children of color in your classroom?
- What have you learned in Block 3 or other classes about teaching in a culturally responsive manner? What is the experience like in the classroom?
- Did the activities from Block 3 make you a more culturally aware individual? If yes, how does that impact you as a student teacher? If no, why not?
- How do you feel the activities from Block 3 prepared you for literacy teaching during your student teaching placement?
- How have you tried to teach literacy in a way that accounts for students' cultural differences? (planning, attitudes, practice)
- What opportunities have you had to get to know about the cultural backgrounds of your students?
- What support have you had for teaching in a culturally responsive way?
- What has made it difficult to teach literacy in a culturally responsive way?
- How have your cooperating teachers supported or discouraged your efforts?

E-mail Reflection Prompts

Reflection 1
This week rather than having a specific topic, I'd just love to hear your thoughts about your student teaching placement. What are your first impressions of your students? Your cooperating teaching? What you're thinking about teaching now that you've seen a full week, how you feel about the teaching experiences you've had thus far, in what ways do you feel prepared and unprepared. In other words, tell me whatever you want to give me a picture of what this student teaching placement is like for you.

Reflection 2
How do you think conversations about race, Whiteness, and culture from class shape the way you see the students in your student teaching classroom? How do you see your students similarly to and/or differently from your mentor teacher?

Reflection 3
What kinds of things are you learning about your students' personal and cultural backgrounds as you interact with them? How, if at all, does this information influence your teaching?

Reflection 4 – Assigned by student teaching coach
By now most of you are leading the classroom! Please take time this week to reflect on the "surprises" (the unexpected differences) you had moving from just a visit for a half day to being in the classroom full-time. Try to write three well-developed paragraphs.

Reflection 5 – Assigned by student teaching coach
Interns were asked to describe how they differentiated instruction in their classrooms

Appendix E: Mr. Johnson's Literacy Rotations

Name _____ **Week of Oct. 11 – Oct. 15**

READING WORKSHOP

You must do these before the end of the week:

Reading Workshop Activity	# of Times	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs	Fri.
 Read independently during Workshop.	5					
 Complete the Daily Reading Log						
 Word Building ✓ Pocket Vocab	1					
 ✓ Take an AR Quiz ✓ Geoskills	2					
 SS Connection: ✓ Read: Hoosiers and the Land ✓ Comprehension Check ✓ Create Indiana Flip Facts	3					
 Read to Someone: ✓ Share a Book ✓ Buzz with a friend	1					
 Meet with Mr.	3					
Total Activities Completed Today.						

Appendix F: Amanda's Invitations

Invitation 1

Through My Eyes

Invitation

You are invited to explore the life of Ruby Bridges, *Through My Eyes.*

Look through the book talk about and describe what you notice.

- As a group discuss how this book makes you feel.
- What are some of the struggles she, her families, and others had on a day to day basis? How does this make you feel?
- Can you relate to this experience? Have you seen this happening in your school, social community?

Look at the artwork.

- What is going on in this piece?
- How do you know this?
- How does it make you feel?
- What do you think the artist message is?

Create!

Now that you have had the chance to look through the book and the artwork, its time to create a product. Choose atleast one of the following options and leave a product in the folder

- Draw a picture about a time that you have had that relates to this book.
- Write a story based on how this book makes you feel.
- Draw a picture that represents how you feel when reading this book or looking at the artwork

Materials Needed

- *Through My Eyes,* a story by Ruby Bridges
- Paper
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers
- Pencils
- Hard working brains! :)

Invitation 2

Whoever you are, Wherever you are, However you are.

You are invited to choose a story from the following list to become an "expert" on and discuss with your classmates: *Molly's Pilgrim, Whoever You Are, Trevor's Story, If She Only Knew Me.*

Choose a book and read through it, jot down anything you notice or feel about the book.

- As a group discuss what your book was about.
- How did this book make you feel?
- How does this book connect to your life or your social community?

Look at the pictures and art work in the book.

- What is going on?
- How do you know?
- How does this make you feel?
- What do you think the message is?

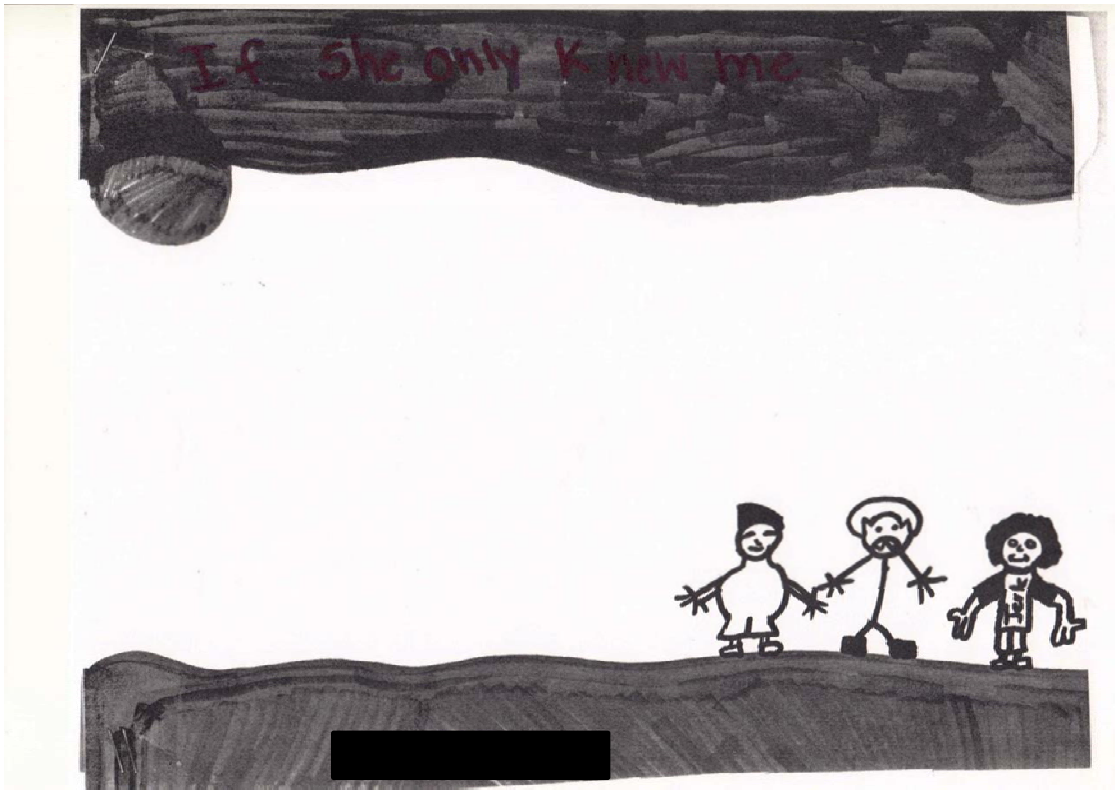
CREATE!
Now that you have had the chance to look through the books and pictures/artworks, its time to create a product! Choose atleast one of the following options and leave a product in the folder.

- Draw a picture about a time that you have had that relates to this book/ story.
- Write a story based on how this book makes you feel.
- Write an "If you only knew me" story book.
- Draw a picture that represents how you feel when reading the book or looking at the artwork.
- BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE TITLE OF THE PIECE YOU ARE RELATING YOUR PRODUCT TO!

Materials needed:

- One choosen book out of the stack
- Paper
- Crayons/colored pencils/markers
- Pencils
- Hard working brains! :)

Appendix G: Jaron's Book



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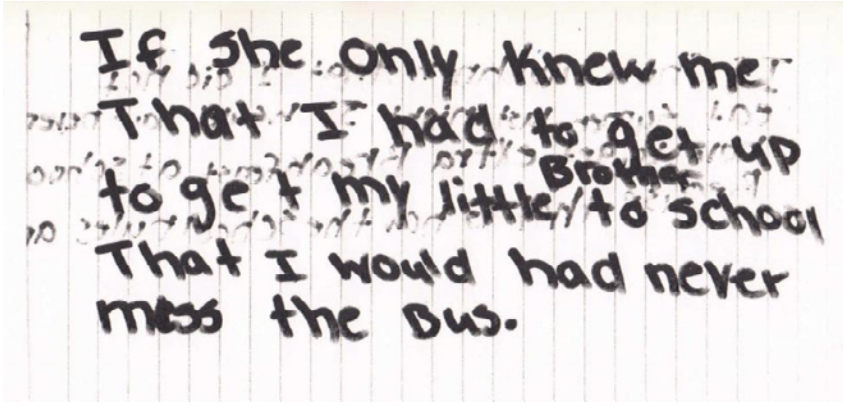

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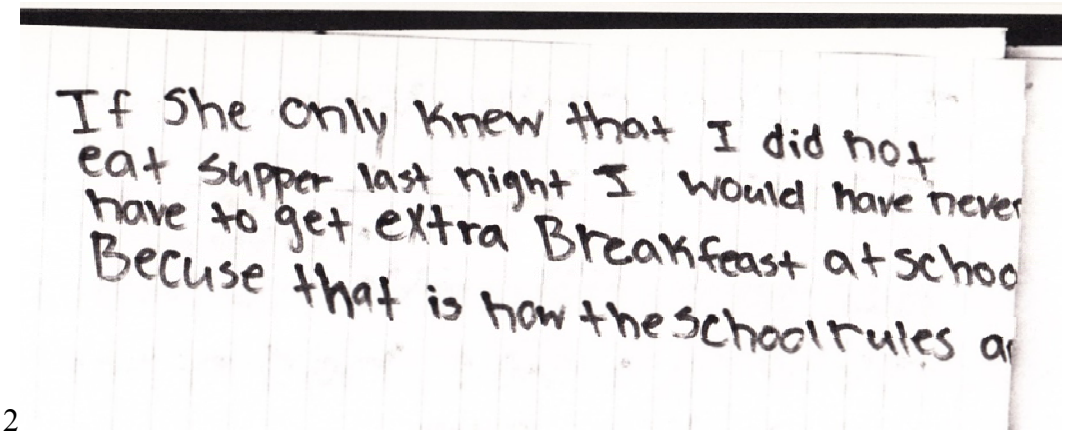

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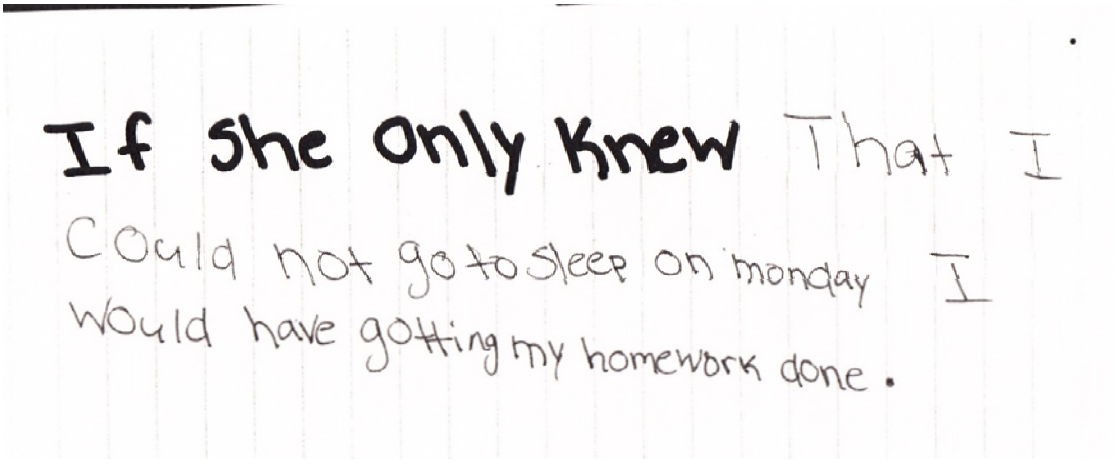

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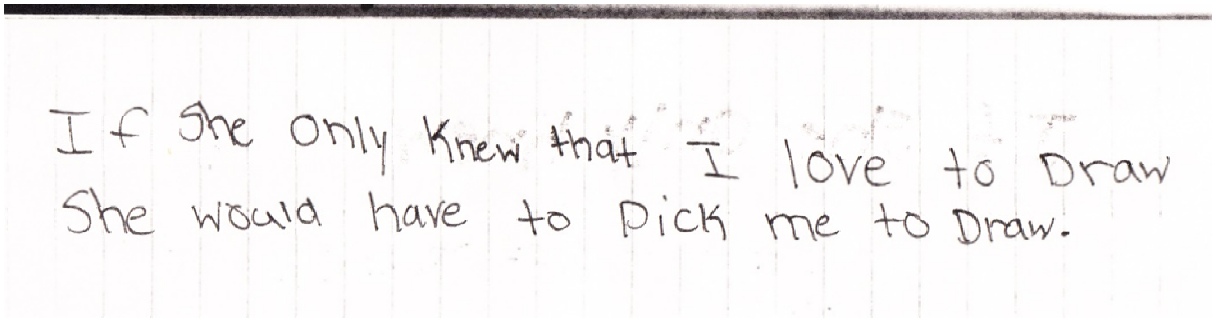

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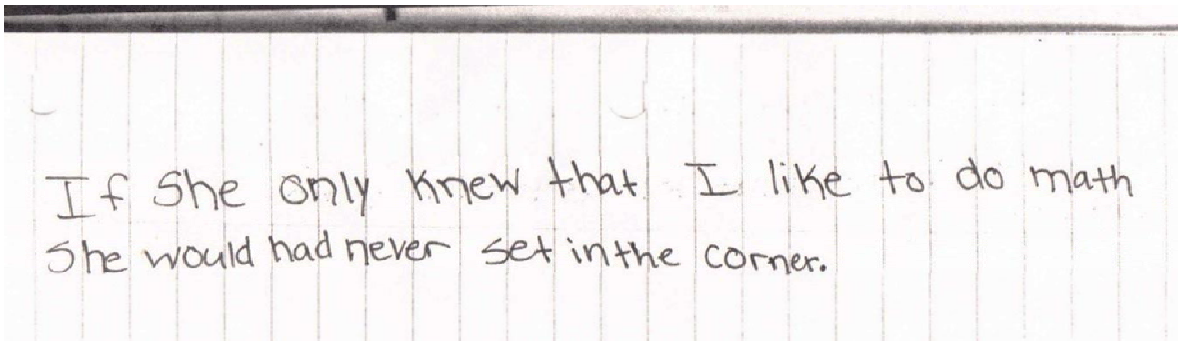
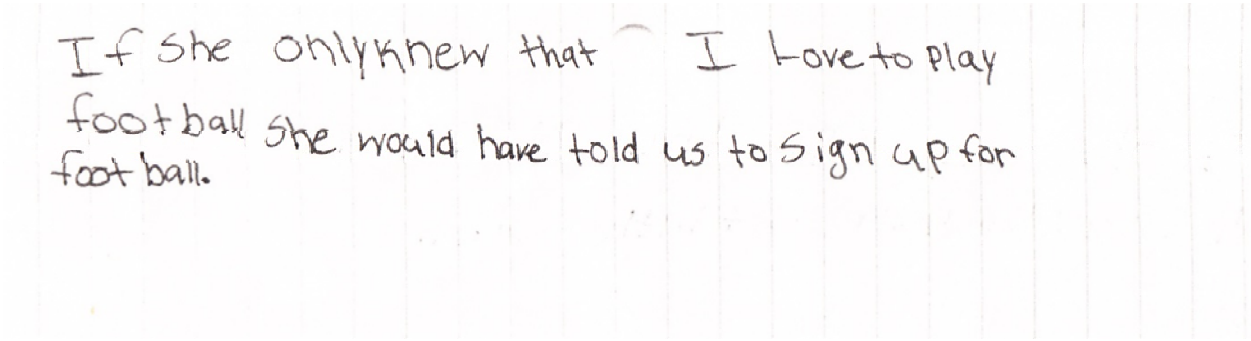

If she only knew that I like to do math
She would had never set in the corner.

Page 5


If she only knew that I Love to play
foot ball she would have told us to sign up for
foot ball.

Page 6

Appendix H: Milner's (2006) Critically Reflective Questions

1. How will my race influence my work as a teacher with students of color?
2. How will my students' race influence their work with me as the teacher?
3. What is the effect of race on my thinking, beliefs, and actions?
4. How do I, as a teacher, situate myself in the education of others, and how to I negotiate the power structure in my class to allow students to feel a sense of worth?
5. What may be the issues most important to my students and me? What may be the nature of race on these issues?
6. To what degree are my role as teacher and my experiences superior to the experiences and expertise of my students, and is there knowledge to be learned from my constituents?
7. How do I situate and negotiate the students' knowledge, experience, expertise, and race with my own?
8. Am I willing to speak about race on behalf of those who might not be present in the conversation both inside and outside of school, and am I willing to express the injustices of race and racism in conservative spaces?

From: Milner, H. R. (2006). Preservice teachers' learning about cultural and racial diversity: Implications for urban education. *Urban Education, 41*(4), 343-375. doi: 10.1177/0042085906289709

Appendix I: Summary of Implications

Summary of Theoretical and Practical Implications from Chapters 4, 5, and 6
Theoretical Implications
• Sociocultural theory can serve as a starting point for helping preservice teachers consider the role of culture in teaching because its tenets are largely accessible to them. • We, as teacher educators, need to examine the ways we introduce critical pedagogy, including critical multiculturalism, in order to make it more accessible, relevant, and influential for preservice teachers. • Preservice teachers benefit from multiple encounters with Whiteness theory.
Practical Implications
• Preservice teachers need help to see Whiteness and its consequences in education, exposure to culturally diverse classrooms is not enough. • Preservice teachers need opportunities to consider themselves in relation to their students and the curriculum and to develop their own cultural competence. • As teacher educators, we need to consider a more nuanced understanding of resistance. • It is important to provide time and repeated encounters with cultural content in order for preservice teachers to consider the influence of Whiteness on classrooms and literacy teaching. • Repeated encounters with Whiteness over time should focus on both raising awareness of racial injustice and addressing pedagogical practices that counteract the effects of Whiteness in the classroom. • Teacher educators need support in developing competency related to infusing Whiteness into methods courses. • Preservice teacher interns need support making their literacy practices critical. • There is a great need for mentors who exhibit the characteristics of transformationist teachers. • Preservice teachers need greater support from the university as they navigate the challenges of being culturally responsive teachers during student teaching placements.
Research Implications
• Need to design research that attends to the space between the teacher and the students. • Need research that looks longitudinally at how interns' develop racial identity awareness and cultural competency and carry them into teaching • Need research that considers the balance and possibilities involved with addressing the influence of Whiteness investigations on awareness and pedagogy in a teaching program and single courses • Future research might consider the degree to which particular learning tasks are

able to make visible the connections between Whiteness and classroom pedagogy and explore how these ideas are taken up by preservice teachers.
- Future research should consider how teachers' consciousness shapes their instructional practices.

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Kelly Berghoff Royster
8911 Spicewood Court
Indianapolis, Indiana 46260
(317) 514-2597
kellyroyster@gmail.com

Education

2013 Doctor of Philosophy; Literacy, Culture, and Language Education
Minor: Cultural Diversity
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
GPA 4.0/4.0

2008 Master of Arts, Language Education
Reading Endorsement and English as a New Language Certification
Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN
GPA 4.0/4.0

2001 Bachelor of Sciences, Elementary Education
Indiana University, Bloomington, IN
Spring 2000 Semester Abroad, Montpellier, France
GPA 4.0/4.0

Teaching Experience

University Teaching Experience

2011 Adjunct Faculty Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN
E341 Methods of Teaching Reading II

2009 Teaching Assistant Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, IN
E341 Methods of Teaching Reading II
K307 Methods of Teaching Students with Special Needs

Coaching Consultant

2008-2011 Indiana Partnership for Young Writers, Indianapolis, IN

- Supported classroom teachers in their implementation of writing workshop
- Presented seminars for educators regarding the development of reading and writing workshops in the classroom
- Studied student writing; assisted in the development of a scoring continuum to use for writing evaluation, organized and analyzed student writing scores to generate school reports

Elementary Teaching Experience

2006-2008 Third Grade Teacher, Oak Trace Elementary School, Westfield, IN

- Differentiated content and employed various teaching strategies in order to make learning interesting and relevant for all learners
- Fostered the academic, social, and emotional growth of students through building a classroom community, relying on multiple ways of knowing, and employing thematic teaching to help students make connections between disciplines
- Supported students' literacy development through the use of reading and writing workshops
- Writing club leader (2007 -2008) led an afterschool club where student participants created and published books to share at a Young Authors conference
- Third grade team leader (2007-2008)

2001-2004 Second and Third Grade Multiage Classroom Teacher, Fishback Creek Public Academy, Indianapolis, IN

- Facilitated learning in a self-contained second and third grade multiage classroom
- Implemented standards-based thematic instruction and assessment, usually with an emphasis on technology integration
- Collaborated with grade-level team to plan and implement thematic studies, language arts and math activities, and to reflect on classroom practices

Related Experience

2004-2006 High School Youth Ministry, Young Life, Indianapolis, IN

- Built relationships with high school students; mentored, counseled, and encouraged their growth as individuals and young people of faith
- Mobilized a team of volunteer leaders; encouraged their personal and spiritual growth, equipped them with tools and information, and organized their efforts to run a weekly gathering, breakfast, and bible study for high school students
- Established effective lines of communication with students, parents, volunteer leaders, and members of the Young Life committee